

# **North Central Texas Council of Governments**

**NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

**INDUSTRY FORUM  
FOR  
PRIVATE SECTOR CARPOOLING SOLUTIONS FOR THE  
NORTH TEXAS DALLAS-FORT WORTH REGION**

**MARCH 6, 2019**

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On Friday, March 22, 2019 at 11 a.m. Central Time the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) will hold a vendor forum for providers of carpooling services and technologies. The forum will have two purposes: (i) inform the carpooling industry of NCTCOG's plans to access private sector carpooling solutions and (ii) seek industry input on a number of issues such as those described below. The forum will be Web only; no in-person attendance will be required or accepted. NCTCOG will not contract for services through this industry forum. If NCTCOG intends to do so in the future, the mechanism to do so will be through a Request for Proposal.

**Background**

NCTCOG has its own carpooling solution, branded [TryParkingIt](#). TryParkingIt has three relevant components: (1) ride matching capabilities via Web and app; (2) a rewards program for those reporting travel through carpooling and other alternatives to single occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips; and (3) a data dashboard to gather data about non-SOV trips for use in calculating travel and air quality benefits. NCTCOG is in the process of upgrading TryParkingIt through an RFP issued in December 2018.

NCTCOG is aware of multiple private sector carpooling solutions that have emerged since TryParkingIt was developed roughly a decade ago. The purpose of this industry forum and the procurement process that may follow is to explore whether private sector carpooling solutions can deliver significant mobility benefits to the North Texas region.

NCTCOG believes that carpooling has the potential to deliver multiple benefits for the region, including the following: (1) Providing low wage workers an opportunity to access employment at lower cost than owning their own vehicle; (2) giving a highway speed mobility option for people who chose not to drive or are unable to drive; (3) relieving vehicle congestion on crowded roadways during peak periods; and (4) reducing vehicle emissions per capita by reducing the percentage of SOV trips.

**Carpooling in North Texas**

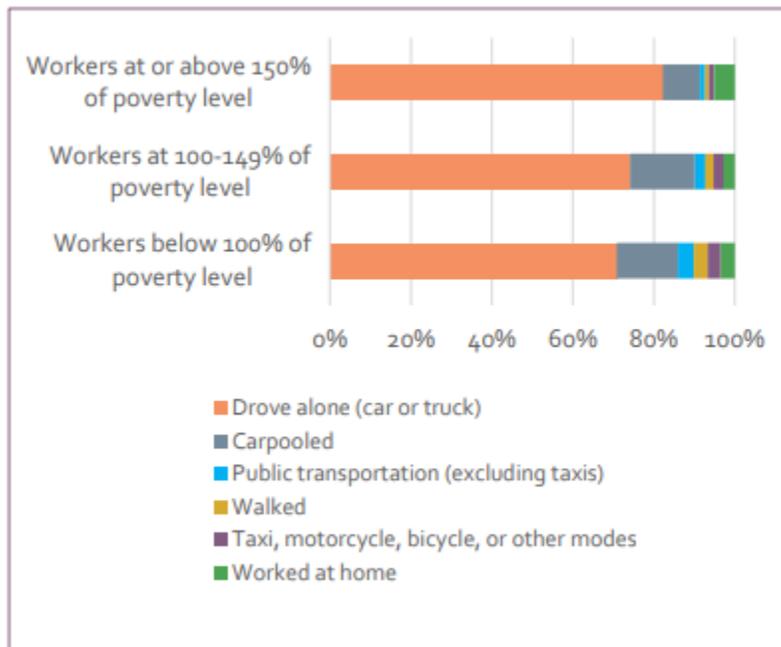
The North Texas urbanized region encompasses approximately 9,000 square miles and currently has approximately 7.2 million residents. It is the fourth largest metropolitan region in the country, in terms of both population and economic output. North Texas is growing rapidly and is projected to reach a population of about 11.2 million by 2045. This growth is consistent with the projected growth in the other metropolitan areas that make up the "Texas Triangle," which include Houston, San Antonio and Austin. NCTCOG believes that carpooling programs

rolled out in North Texas will be readily transferable to the other large metropolitan regions in Texas. More information about North Texas and its transportation system can be found in the 2045 Plan ([www.nctcog.org/trans/plan/mtp/2045](http://www.nctcog.org/trans/plan/mtp/2045)) adopted by the Regional Transportation Council on June 14, 2018.

North Texas has a robust highway system that consists of approximately 88,710 miles of public highway lane miles. North Texas is a national leader in dynamically priced managed lanes, with approximately 280 such lane miles. These lanes use price to manage demand on the lanes and ensure free flowing traffic for motorists who choose to access those lanes. North Texas has approximately 5,600 lane miles of traditional fixed-priced toll highways, where prices are fixed and users lack the option of one or more lanes of free-flowing traffic. The average commute time in North Texas is around 28 minutes, one way. The average commute length is twenty-four miles, round trip, resulting in an average cost of \$174,314 for commuting over a lifetime.

There are approximately 36 trillion vehicle miles traveled annually in the region. The mode shares for personal (i.e., non-freight) vehicle work trips in the region are as follows. (See below, Exhibit 3-13; Mobility 2045, Chapter 3):

**Exhibit 3-13: Mode of Travel to Work by Income in the MPA, 2011 to 2015**



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

North Texas is an economically diverse region. The 2045 Plan indicates that approximately 13 percent of the population and 10 percent of families in the region live below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). North Texas has one of the highest rates of vehicle ownership in the country. The cost of owning, operating and maintaining a personal vehicle is substantial as “all counties in North Central Texas, except

for Hunt County, exceed an affordability threshold for the combined cost of housing and transportation” (Mobility 2045, Chapter 3, p. 15). The threshold, as identified by the Center for Neighborhood Technology, is 45 percent of household income. Transportation is the second highest expense item for most households and can consume 25% or more of the income of a low-income household.

For many people in North Texas, having access to a vehicle is essential if they want to access a significant number of jobs. Substantial parts of North Texas have no fixed route public transit service and many jobs are being created in those areas. Even in areas covered by a public transit agency, access to many jobs is not practical due to trip lengths, limited service availability or lack of “last mile” options between a job site and bus stop or train station. Employers report that affordable transportation to and from their job sites is a significant barrier for many low-wage workers. Providing low income individuals with access to highway travel without having to own their own vehicles has major equity implications and economic development benefits for North Texas. NCTCOG believes that carpooling is an attractive and relatively low-cost way for low income people and non-drivers to access highway transportation without having to incur the cost of personally owning a vehicle.

Carpooling also increases the efficiency of our highway transportation system. Most vehicles travel with empty seats. At peak travel times some of North Texas highways and streets are clogged with vehicles. Carpooling increases average vehicle occupancy, which increases the people throughput on a roadway, and can help alleviate congestion by taking cars off the road during peak periods. North Texas is an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) air quality nonattainment region. Increasing average vehicle occupancy may have air quality benefits.

As laid out in Mobility 2045, NCTCOG seeks to make North Texas a region of transportation mode choice. This means building capacity for multiple mobility options to thrive in the region. The purpose of this industry forum is to help NCTCOG assess whether private sector carpooling solutions can make carpooling a viable transportation option at all times of day and throughout all of North Texas. NCTCOG’s goal is a carpooling network that is robust enough that North Texans can access their jobs, schools and other destinations on a reliable basis via carpooling. This carpooling network will supplement and extend the current carpooling network established and maintained by NCTCOG, described above.

## **The Industry Forum**

NCTCOG intends the industry forum to be an interactive event. NCTCOG is holding the forum to explore one basic question: Can private sector carpooling solutions scale to a point that carpooling can become a dependable mode of travel throughout the day (and night) and throughout the North Texas region for people who don’t wish to drive or are unable to drive? If so, what kind and level of effort would it take from the region and from private carpooling solution providers to get carpooling to become a dependable and cost-effective mode of travel in North Texas?

Related issues that NCTCOG would like to explore in the industry forum include the following:

- Whether carpooling in a region is best done through a single solution or multiple carpooling platforms?
- Are there carpooling solutions that can be targeted to increase average vehicle occupancy on highly congested corridors?
- What incentives are most effective in building carpooling market share?
- What are the biggest obstacles to building carpooling market share?
- What public policies are most effective in building carpooling market share?
- How can the public sector effectively support private sector carpooling companies in building carpooling market share?
- How can carpooling solutions best serve the mobility needs of low-income and non-driving populations?
- What data are carpooling providers willing and able to share with NCTCOG through an API with the TryParkingIt data dashboard or some other means?
- Can the TryParkingIt rewards program help advance private carpooling solutions and, if so, how so?
- What public and private funding sources can be used to support carpooling efforts?

At the industry forum NCTCOG will lay out its vision for carpooling in the North Texas region and its thoughts on how to best access private sector carpooling solutions. Currently, **NCTCOG is considering two approaches for a regionwide carpooling initiative:**

- **Approach 1:** The first approach would be to use a process to identify private sector industry partners with whom NCTCOG would cooperate on efforts to expand carpooling market share in North Texas. These efforts might include joint publicity campaigns, consumer education, and employer outreach coordination. This approach would not involve any payments from NCTCOG to carpooling vendors or third parties.
- **Approach 2:** The second approach would use a process to identify cost-effective carpooling solutions for which NCTCOG would provide funding to carpooling vendors or third parties like carpoolers themselves, or both.

The industry forum will be open to all interested parties. While all parties are encouraged to participate, no one is required to participate. **There will be time for short (5 minutes or less) presentations by up to five parties on a first come first served basis.** Please advise Emily Beckham (TransRFPs@nctcog.org) if you would like to make a presentation. Presentations should focus on the basic question outlined above. You may also submit questions and ideas for the forum to Ms. Beckham. An agenda will then be circulated in advance of the industry forum to all those who have signed up to participate. You may also submit written materials that you believe are pertinent to the topics covered by the industry forum to Ms. Beckham.

Following the industry forum, NCTCOG reserves the right to contact participants and hold individual meetings to seek additional information and/or request one or more participants to provide a more detailed presentation. This process is intended to be the mechanism by which

NCTCOG receives information from the industry on available technologies. It should not be construed as a commitment or as authorization to incur cost for which reimbursement would be required or sought.

### **Relevant Dates**

**March 18, 2019:** Deadline for submitting questions, suggested forum topics, and requests to make a presentation at the forum.

**March 22, 2019, 11 a.m. Central Time:** Industry forum. The forum will be scheduled to run for one hour but may run longer at NCTCOG's discretion if the discussion warrants such. In no event will the forum run for more than two hours. **Please send your RSVP to Emily Beckham ([TransRFPs@nctcog.org](mailto:TransRFPs@nctcog.org)) by 6 p.m. on March 22, 2019—include participant's name and organization in the email body.**

### **Joining the Forum**

There are two ways to join the forum—through **Webex** and/or **conference call**. If you wish to view the slides, log in to Webex (details below). A conference call line (details below) is also provided—you can use both options simultaneously if you'd like to see the slides but listen through your phone.

#### **Webex:**

Click [HERE](#) to join.

Meeting number: 807 794 285

If the Webex link, above, does not work, copy and past the following URL into your internet browser:

<https://nctcog.webex.com/nctcog/j.php?MTID=m30a46aad83ee03a6d627ff5c41f4e7a9>

#### **Conference Call:**

1-888-909-7654

Participant PIN: 504 571 #

### **About NCTCOG**

NCTCOG is a voluntary association of, by, and for local governments. It was established to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development. NCTCOG's purpose is to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments and to help them recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication, and make joint decisions.

Since 1974, NCTCOG has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation in the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) Metropolitan Area. NCTCOG's Transportation

Department is responsible for regional transportation planning for all modes of transportation. The Department provides technical support and staff assistance to the Regional Transportation Council and its technical committees, which compose the MPO policy-making structure. In addition, the Transportation Department provides technical assistance to the local governments of North Texas in planning, programming, coordinating, and implementing transportation decisions.

**Direct all communications to NCTCOG regarding the industry forum to Emily Beckham:**

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