



February 2026

NCTCOG's Wheeler Hired as Executive Director of San Antonio MPO



Brendon Wheeler, who for years managed development of Dallas-Fort Worth's long-range transportation plan, is moving down Interstate Highway 35 to San Antonio. There, he will lead transportation planning efforts at the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO).

Wheeler, who spent the past seven years steering the Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), was recently hired as executive director of the Alamo Area MPO. He began his new job Feb. 2.

A professional engineer, Wheeler joined NCTCOG in 2018 as a senior transportation planner following 10 years in the private sector. Last May, he was promoted to senior program manager after leading the development of Mobility 2050, the \$217.3 billion blueprint for Dallas-Fort Worth's transportation system.

NCTCOG is recognized as a leader for its embrace of creative solutions to complex transportation issues. In San Antonio, Wheeler hopes to help AAMPO achieve a similar status among peer metropolitan planning organizations.

"The board has been very clear that they want the San Antonio MPO to be one of the premier MPOs in the nation," he said. "To do that, they'll either need to forge their own path or follow examples from nationally recognized MPOs like NCTCOG, DRCOG (Denver Regional Council of Governments) or SANDAG (San Diego Association of Governments), regardless of population size."

Born and raised in West Texas, Wheeler welcomes new adventures and the opportunity to experience different cultures. In 1995, he moved with his family to Izmir, Turkey, on the Aegean Coast, where his parents were missionaries for 11 years.

He had friends from around the globe — South Korea, Germany, Great Britain, Sweden, even California — helping him understand other cultures. Living in Izmir, which had a population of 4 million at the time, also gave him an appreciation for public transportation.

When Wheeler and his family lived there, most people didn't own a car or even know anyone with a car, he said.

"So, we took public transit wherever we went," he said. "We walked, we took public trains, if we were going anywhere. That's what we got used to, just navigating the city that way."

After returning to Texas in 2006, he studied engineering at LeTourneau University in Longview. He graduated from the University of Texas at Arlington in 2011 with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering.

Living in so many diverse environments, from rural West Texas to a densely populated international city to a region as spread out as Dallas-Fort Worth, has given Wheeler an appreciation for different approaches to planning.

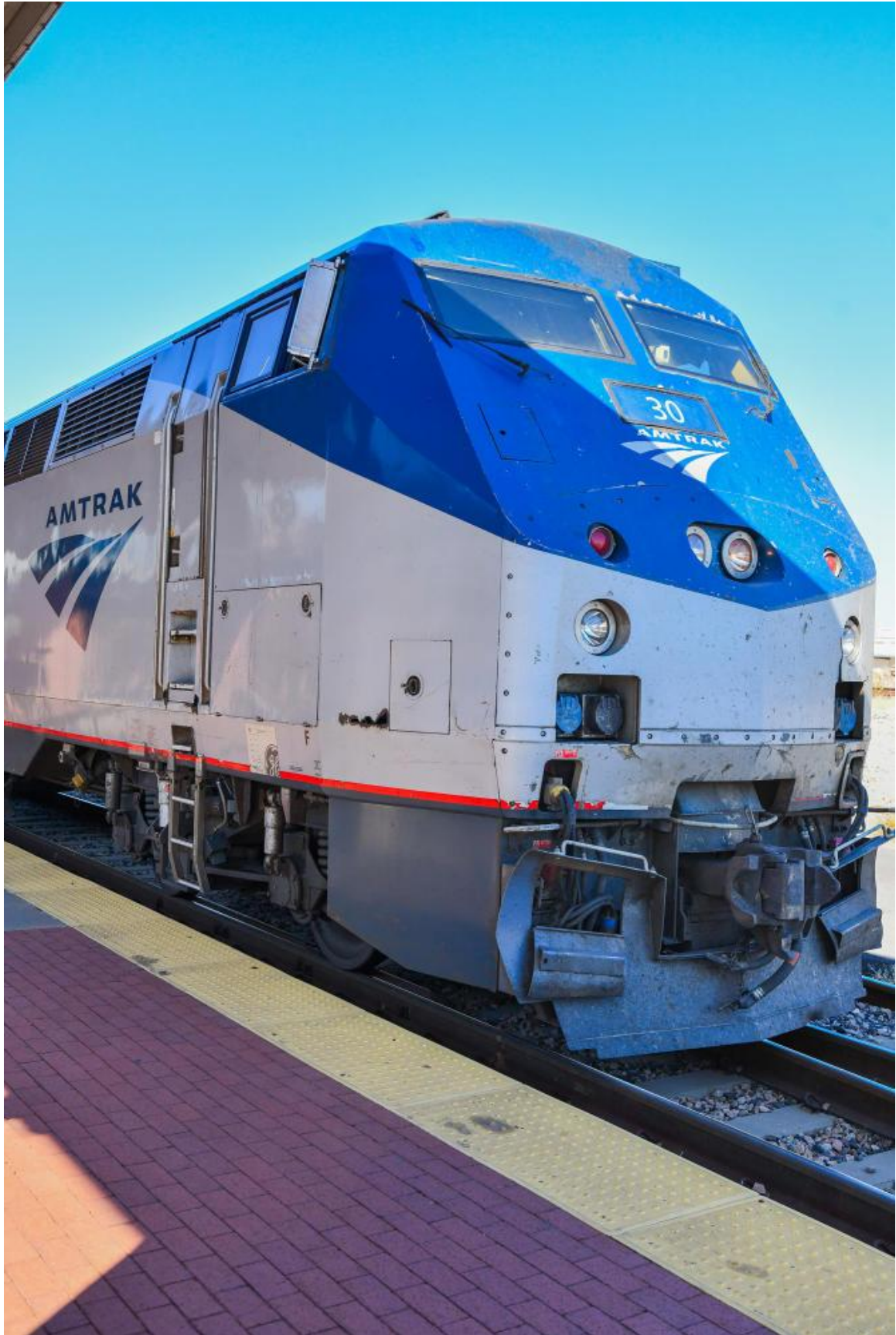
He'll use these different experiences, together with the skills he learned at NCTCOG to inform his leadership in San Antonio, the state's second-largest city, which anchors a growing metropolitan area of 2.5 million.

As he turns the page to the next chapter of his career, Wheeler sees an opportunity for a more cohesive approach where metropolitan planning organizations like NCTCOG and AAMPO work together for solutions to common challenges.

"We're all one big family, really," he said. "We're just serving different regions as best we know how and different policy boards. But there's a common vision."

Topic of the Month

AN EYE ON: Intercity Rail



Local and regional rail play a vital role in moving people throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth area. But what about travel beyond North Texas? Intercity rail provides an equally essential connection for travelers, commuters and explorers alike, linking North Texas to other major cities and expanding how far rail can take us.

For February's Topic of the Month, we climb aboard the subject of intercity rail, exploring the trains and services that connect the Dallas-Fort Worth area to the rest of Texas and beyond, the role they play in regional mobility and what the future may hold for longer-distance rail travel. Read more about our Topic of the Month [here](#).

\$58.6M in Rebates Available to Power Regional Zero Emission Fleets



NCTCOG is offering \$58.6 million in rebate funding for the North Texas Zero Emission Vehicles (NTxZEV) Call for Projects. The application window closes at 5 p.m. Feb. 13.

Eligible vehicles include vocational models such as step vans, box trucks, refuse haulers, street sweepers, transit buses and more.

The program will replace existing diesel, gasoline, natural gas and propane Class 6 & 7 vehicles with battery-electric or hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicle options.

Applicants are also encouraged to utilize the free technical assistance offered by the National Laboratory of the Rockies (NLR), formerly known as NREL. NLR offers impartial, no-cost and customizable technical assistance to support fleets in planning and deploying fueling and charging infrastructure, transit, and medium- and heavy-duty vehicle projects. They may be contacted via email at cleanhdvehiclesta@nrel.gov or at DriveElectric.gov/contact.

For project requirements and information, visit the program [webpage](#).

Subcommittee Unveils Principles for Regional Transit Improvements



The subcommittee studying how public transportation in the Dallas-Fort Worth area can be reimagined for the future has unveiled a draft of its vision statement.

The Regional Transportation Council's Transit Vision Subcommittee discussed a set of principles during a January meeting, calling for "a unified region where safe, reliable transit connects everyone to opportunity."

Here are the principles outlined as part of the vision:

- A regional system should provide a spine service of rail and/or bus rapid transit within an appropriate regional boundary to be identified.
- An equitable governance mechanism should oversee the regional spine transit system.
- An equitable funding mechanism should be identified for the regional spine transit system.
- The regional spine system should be coordinated with community-based transit solutions.

Chaired by Denton City Councilmember Jill Jester, the group has been meeting twice a month since beginning its work in September.

The subcommittee will continue meeting while it works toward a set of recommendations for how the transit system should be refocused to serve a region with nearly 4 million more people. According to NCTCOG projections, Dallas-Fort Worth's population of 8.6 million will grow to more than 12 million by 2050. For more information, visit the Regional Transit 2.0 [webpage](#).

Highway Construction Costs Show Signs of Stabilizing



The numbers are in: Highway construction costs stabilized in 2025 after years of rapid post-COVID growth, according to a new analysis by the North Central Texas Council of Governments.

NCTCOG recently updated its adaptation of the Texas Department of Transportation's Highway Cost Index, which shows how the cost of building a highway has changed since 1997. The index uses information about the prices of materials involved in highway construction to understand how the cost of building a highway has changed over time. Planners update the index every month and summarize trends at the end of the year.

The latest update shows that highway construction costs increased by 2.67% from 2024 to 2025. This means that building a highway now costs more than it has in 28 years of recorded data, and nearly five times more than it did in 1997.

However, 2025 also departs from a trend of rapid cost growth that began in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and peaked in 2023, when construction costs rose by over 26% in one year. Cost growth has continued but slowed substantially since then, and 2025 marks the lowest annual rate of increase since before the pandemic.

Although the Highway Cost Index tracks actual cost categories over time and does not predict the future, recent trends suggest the cost of building a highway could stabilize at post-pandemic levels. This helps planners understand what to expect as they prepare for future transportation investments.

Input Requested on Transportation, AQ Improvement at Feb. 9 Public Meeting



NCTCOG invites the public to provide input on recent transportation initiatives, funding requests and air quality improvement updates during a hybrid public meeting at noon on Monday, Feb. 9.

The meeting will be held in the Transportation Council Room at the NCTCOG offices, located at 616 Six Flags Drive in Arlington. Those unable to attend in person can view the meeting online at PublicInput.com/nctcogFeb26. Residents can also participate by calling 855-925-2801 and entering code 2831. Public comments will be accepted until March 10.

The meeting will feature staff presentations covering the 2027-2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the final draft of the Dallas-Fort Worth Air Quality Improvement Plan: Comprehensive Action Plan and an overview of a North Tarrant Express funding request.

Look Out Texans

Staying Safe When There Are No Sidewalks



Whether you are walking, jogging, or enjoying time outdoors to achieve your health goals, it's important to keep safety in mind.

When you are walking or jogging along the road, sidewalks are always the safest option; however, they are not always available. If you don't have the benefit of a sidewalk, Texas law allows pedestrians to walk **facing oncoming traffic**. This helps ensure both you and drivers can see each other and respond safely.

Making yourself visible to traffic goes hand in hand with another key safety habit: **making eye contact with drivers when crossing the street**. Staying aware and **looking out** for others can help prevent crashes.

Why It Matters:

Understanding how pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers interact on our roadways is crucial for the safety of all North Texans: our families, friends, and neighbors.

For more tips on walking, bicycling, and driving safely, visit [LookOutTexans.org](https://www.LookOutTexans.org).

Local Motion is a monthly email newsletter from the North Central Texas Council of Governments Transportation Department. For more information about 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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