



April 2024

Welcome to Local Motion, a monthly email newsletter from the North Central Texas Council of Governments Transportation Department.

NCTCOG awarded \$80M in federal funding to restitch communities



In partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation, the North Central Texas Council of Governments has been awarded \$80 million to help fund projects seeking to reknit communities divided by the construction of major roadways.

Interstate Highway 30 (Dallas IH 30) and Klyde Warren Park will each receive \$20 million of the award. Additionally, Southern Gateway Park will receive \$25 million and State Highway 5 (McKinney SH 5) will receive \$15 million of the federal award.

The Dallas IH 30 project, located directly south of downtown Dallas and north of Old City Park, will include the installation of support structures for three pedestrian caps/parks. The timing of the infrastructure construction will align with TxDOT's reconstruction of IH 30, avoiding the need for additional funding later.

The Klyde Warren and Southern Gateway Parks projects will be the second phase of construction for existing pedestrian crossings. In Klyde Warren Park, phase two will extend an existing pedestrian cap/deck park creating additional space between Pearl Street and west of Akard Street. Southern Gateway Park will see a five-acre expansion of its current deck park located between South Ewing Avenue to South Marsalis Avenue. Both completed spaces will include pavilions, green spaces and additional multimodal transportation access.

McKinney SH 5 will see the construction of a below-bridge pedestrian plaza within the corridor that will allow pedestrian access to both sides and reknit the community while addressing the highway's damaging effects. This space will provide a safe bicycle/pedestrian connection between Historic Downtown McKinney and disadvantaged East McKinney neighborhoods; additionally, it will connect downtown McKinney to the future City Hall.

High-speed rail project enters NEPA environmental phase



The project that would link Fort Worth and Dallas by high-speed rail has officially entered the federal environmental analysis phase and is on track to be environmentally cleared within a year. In a letter dated March 4, the Federal Transit Administration granted a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Class of Action Determination to the project, enabling the environmental assessment to begin.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments has been planning the North Texas line, which would generally run along Interstate Highway 30 for a majority of its planned alignment from Fort Worth to Dallas, with a stop in Arlington, and connect to the planned Dallas-to-Houston high-speed rail project.

Through the Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Connections Study, high-speed rail along IH 30 emerged as the preferred method to connect people seamlessly from throughout the region to the planned Dallas-to-Houston route via a one-seat ride, where passengers between Fort Worth and Houston could board a single train to reach their destination.

NCTCOG has conducted over 200 meetings, giving the public, local governments and other stakeholders the chance to participate along the way. Input from the public and various stakeholders will be counted on throughout the NEPA analysis phase and beyond to implement the right project for North Texas.

Once the corridor is environmentally cleared, it has the potential to attract future private investment. Combined with the planned high-speed rail line from Dallas to Houston, the North Texas project would lay the groundwork for a system of high-speed trains that could connect passengers to other metropolitan areas throughout the state and nation.

EV readiness program launches in N. Texas

Helping local governments become
EV charging leaders



Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities, hosted by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), and the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) have

announced the launch of Charging Smart, a new designation program that awards communities for electric vehicle (EV) readiness. Charging Smart is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)'s Vehicle Technologies Office (VTO).

The program provides personalized, no-cost technical assistance to help municipalities set and achieve policies that facilitate the equitable expansion of EVs and EV charging in their communities. Local governments that achieve certain metrics are awarded Bronze, Silver, or Gold designations, a public recognition of their status as EV-friendly communities.

Charging Smart is launching a pilot phase for local governments in the regions of North Texas and Southern California and the states of Colorado and Virginia. Communities in Minnesota, Michigan, and Ohio are already engaged in a developmental phase of the program, and communities from one of these states are expected to become the first Charging Smart designated cohort later this spring. A comparable program has already been launched in Northern Illinois in collaboration with Charging Smart. Charging Smart will be made available to communities throughout the U.S. in the future.

Local governments in North Texas are invited to get involved in the program. Contact cleancities@nctcog.org for details on the program and/or information on how to participate.

By the Numbers:

\$80 million

Federal funding awarded NCTCOG for a series of pedestrian caps intended to reconnect communities bisected by highway projects.

April is Car Care Awareness Month



Are you Car Care Aware? April is spring National Car Care Awareness Month and that means taking a few extra steps to ensure your vehicle is in good working condition for the seasons ahead. Not only could preventative maintenance save you both time and money, but it could also keep the air we breathe clean and yourself and passengers safe on the roadway.

Vehicle preventative maintenance includes making sure your check engine light is not illuminated, tires are inflated properly and have plenty of tread depth left, windshield wipers aren't cracked or torn, and your fluids are all topped off. Discovering that your vehicle wasn't prepared for the springtime showers can be dangerous, so plan ahead.

As spring quickly gives way to more intense summertime temperatures, ensuring that your cooling system is up to the task is important, as well. An overheated engine could not only leave you stranded but cost you substantially in repairs. Luckily, an engine will generally give you warning before disaster strikes, so keep an eye on the coolant level as well as the temperature gauge.

If you notice that the dreaded check engine light has appeared on the dashboard, don't delay! Have it looked at by a qualified technician. Prolonging that repair could not only cost you more money in the long run, but is making your vehicle pollute excessively as well, affecting our regional air quality. In addition, you won't pass your annual vehicle inspection. Stay safe and remember to be Car Care Aware! For more information on this regional air quality and vehicle safety initiative, visit ntxcarcare.org.

Reducing the Runtime: Engine Off North Texas



Engine Off North Texas (EONT) is a regional air quality initiative which connects members of local governments, businesses and the public to resources and information about reducing engine idling focused mainly on heavy-duty diesel vehicles. Ten counties in the North Central Texas region are designated as nonattainment for federal ground-level ozone pollutant standards. Of the on-road mobile emissions sources, heavy-duty vehicles contribute around 48% of nitrogen oxides (a ground-level ozone forming pollutant). Therefore, air quality initiatives like EONT are focused on reducing pollution from the heavy-duty transportation vehicle sector which can lead to improving the environment and human health. EONT offers information like highlighting local governments' ordinances and policies encouraging heavy-duty diesel vehicle idle reduction as well as promotes installation and use of idle reduction infrastructure and devices such as auxiliary power units which can help reduce diesel engine emissions.

This program provides guidance and educational materials at no charge, including posters and brochures with information related to idling impacts and idle reduction strategies.

North Texans can report excessive heavy-duty diesel truck idling to the North Central Texas Council of Governments in one of two ways: by visiting our website at www.engineoffnorthtexas.org; or by calling the hotline at 1-877-NTX-IDLE (1-877-689-4353) -- which results in owners of heavy-duty diesel vehicles being notified by mail. In 2023, EONT received 49 idling reports and distributed materials to entities in jurisdictions with idle restriction ordinances.

Currently, 29 local governments in the North Central Texas region have active idling ordinances on the books. EONT continues its efforts in North Texas to identify and

address unnecessary idling activity to reduce diesel engine emissions. To learn more about the current status of North Central Texas air quality, visit nctcog.org/airquality.

April public meeting spotlights collaborative efforts throughout region



**TRANSPORTATION
PUBLIC MEETING**

APRIL 9 · NOON · 616 SIX FLAGS DR. ARLINGTON, TX 76011

The graphic features the text 'TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC MEETING' in large, bold, yellow and white letters with a blue outline, set against a background of various transportation-related icons. Below this, a yellow banner contains the date, time, and location information in bold black text.

NCTCOG is seeking input on long-range transportation planning, efforts to reconnect communities in the region and other transportation planning initiatives during the next public meeting, which will take place at noon Tuesday, April 9.

The meeting will be held at NCTCOG's Arlington offices, 616 Six Flags Drive. Residents can also watch the meeting live at publicinput.com/nctcogApril24, or participate over the phone by dialing 855-925-2801, then code 10201. In addition to feedback gathered during the meeting, public comments will be accepted until May 7.

Mobility 2050 is NCTCOG's long-range plan for transportation. Its development has been initiated and staff will provide an overview of key considerations and public input opportunities. For more information on the long-range transportation plan, visit nctcog.org/planinprogress.

The U.S. Department of Transportation recently awarded NCTCOG \$80 million to restitch neighborhoods through the Neighborhood Access and Equity grant program. The awarded money will fund the foundational infrastructure for pedestrian caps/pedestrian connections in Klyde Warren Park, Southern Gateway Park, McKinney's State Highway 5 and Interstate Highway 30 in Dallas. Klyde Warren Park and Southern Gateway Park are expansion projects, while the McKinney SH 5 and Dallas IH 30 projects are new investments. Each project will improve residents' options for non-automotive transportation and reduce or remove major highway barriers.

NCTCOG currently leads multiple vehicle emissions reduction initiatives. Staff will present strategies for reducing air pollution, including information about the Car Care Awareness campaign and Engine Off North Texas program. Car Care Awareness educates vehicle owners and the public about proper vehicle maintenance practices, and Engine Off North Texas aims to mitigate the effects of unnecessary vehicle idling. Through participation in these initiatives, residents can actively contribute to improving regional air quality. For more information, visit nctcog.org/trans/quality/air/For-Everyone.

The Department of Energy Multimodal Delivery Project is a collaborative effort led by the City of Arlington that NCTCOG is participating in. The project aims to test and evaluate new mobility options to deliver essential food items to underserved communities. These deliveries will be made by a combination of vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) drones, 6-foot-long battery powered drones that can carry nearly nine pounds and autonomous delivery robots with a cargo bay. Staff will provide information about the project, as well as upcoming demonstration opportunities.

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the 12-county Dallas-Fort Worth area, NCTCOG is required to set regional targets for roadway safety by the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act. These targets are used to track and report on the region's performance through existing documents such as the MTP, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the State of the Region report. Staff will provide an update on the proposed 2024 targets and actual performance of the 2022 targets.

Resources and information about Interactive Public Input: Map Your Experience, air quality programs and funding opportunities, Try Parking It and the Business Engagement Program will also be available online and at the meeting.

For residents who want to take transit to the meeting, \$6 roundtrip rides from the CentrePort/DFW Airport Station to NCTCOG are available through the Arlington Transportation app. To download the app, visit www.arlingtontx.gov/ondemand. For special accommodation due to disabilities or language interpretation, contact 817-695-9255 or email jcastillo@nctcog.org.

We're celebrating spring at community events. Come join us!



If you have questions about transportation and air quality, this is a good time of year to get them answered. In addition to a public meeting, you have several other opportunities to visit with us face to face this month. As a bonus, you may be able to enjoy some beautiful spring weather. Outreach season continues throughout April, with staff members appearing at Earth Day-related events through April 25. To find one near you, visit nctcog.publicinput.com/#events.

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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