

MINUTES

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL PUBLIC MEETING

Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Grant Award Additions to Mobility Plan

2050 Demographics for New Mobility Plan

Transit Strategic Partnerships: Recommended Projects

FY24 Public Transportation Funding: Program of Projects

Proposed Modifications to the List of Funded Projects

Meeting Date and Location

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) held a hybrid public meeting Monday, August 12, 2024, at noon in Arlington. Patrons could attend in person, via phone or view the live stream at www.publicinput.com/nctcogAugust24. Chris Klaus, Senior Program Manager, moderated the meeting attended by 92 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:

- Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Grant Award Additions to Mobility Plan – **presented by Jared Wright**
- 2050 Demographics for New Mobility Plan – **presented by Dan Kessler**
- Transit Strategic Partnerships: Recommended Projects – **presented by Gypsy Gavia**
- FY24 Public Transportation Funding: Program of Projects – **presented by Shawn Dintino**

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/nctcogAugust24.

Summary of Presentations

Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Grant Award Additions to Mobility Plan presentation:
<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/1b3e55af-335e-4abe-8416-e967e994a32e/Alternative-Fuel-Infrastructure-Grant-Award-Additions-to-Mobility-Plan.pdf>

NCTCOG has updated the Mobility 2045 Environmental Considerations chapter to incorporate new projects funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). The updated Mobility 2045 Plan

will guide regional transportation planning and infrastructure development. New projects include the following:

- Charging & Fueling Infrastructure Corridor Program, supported by a \$70 million award, will fund the construction of five hydrogen refueling stations, two within the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA)
- Charging & Fueling Infrastructure Community Program, funded with \$15 million, will establish up to 100 electric vehicle (EV) charging ports and form specialized technical teams for implementation
- Electric Vehicle Charger Reliability and Accessibility Accelerator Program, with a \$3.6 million award, will upgrade or replace 230 EV charging ports across 125 sites
- Texas EV Infrastructure Plan, funded by approximately \$407 million over five years, will deploy DC Fast Chargers Statewide

Modifications to Mobility 2045 include detailed descriptions of these infrastructure projects and updates to air quality initiatives related to zero-emission refueling and EV charging. The updated information is available online, with project listings incorporated into the FY25-FY28 Transportation Improvement Program. For more information, visit www.nctcog.org/mobility2045.

2050 Demographics for New Mobility Plan presentation:

<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/fb81dcec-543c-441d-b5d2-411810c0f255/Forecast-2050.pdf>

NCTCOG's Transportation and Research and Information Services (RIS) Departments are leading the development of the 2050 Regional Population and Employment Control, which is required by federal regulations to be updated every four years. The first step in the process involves creating regional control totals for population and employment. National economists are providing data to support this effort by analyzing the competitiveness of the Dallas-Fort Worth area relative to other regions. Forecasts from Woods & Poole and Perryman & Associates were evaluated, and the analysis supported using Perryman & Associates' estimates. These projections anticipate a population of over 12.4 million and employment reaching 8.6 million by 2050.

The data is currently under internal review and will be provided to local governments and agencies for feedback in July. The NCTCOG Executive Board is expected to take action on the forecasts in Fall 2024.

Transit Strategic Partnerships: Recommended Projects presentation:

<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/9a93c06f-4922-4224-a270-355ac5617a46/Transit-Strategic-Partnerships-Program.pdf>

The Transit Strategic Partnerships Program was created as a competitive funding program. Eligible applicants include transit authorities, rural providers and nonprofits collaborating with existing transit providers to avoid duplication of services. The program funds new or expanded services for two to three years and focuses on the needs of low-income populations, elderly individuals and people with disabilities.

The most recent cycle of project evaluations has closed, and the Transportation Assistance Hub is one of the initiatives being considered for funding. NCTCOG is currently accepting initiation

forms for the next round of Transit Strategic Partnership proposals through October 2024. Proposals will be reviewed, scored and selected in Winter 2024, and federal approval is expected in Fall 2025.

FY24 Public Transportation Funding: Program of Projects presentation:

<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/ac62dff7-949e-4bf5-9007-dfdce71c7eed/Fiscal-Year-2024-Public-Transportation-Funding-Programs-of-Projects.pdf>

FY24 Public Transportation Funding: Program of Projects attachment:

<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/bf94631f-7860-4496-8f9f-ac531280eb0a/Fiscal-Year-2024-Public-Transportation-Funding-Programs-of-Projects-Attachment-1.pdf>

Public transportation is part of a comprehensive transportation system and includes various types of services, such as fixed route, commuter, demand response and rail. Investing in these modes has a positive economic impact within communities, provides access for people with mobility impairments, reduces roadway congestion and improves air quality as well as safety.

Three urbanized areas, Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, Denton-Lewisville and McKinney are eligible to receive formula funds through the Program of Projects. There are four federal funding programs for the aforementioned areas:

- Urbanized Area Formula
- Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities
- State of Good Repair
- Bus and Bus Facilities

The Dallas-Fort Worth region received approximately \$193.4 million in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) formula funds through the Fiscal Year 2024 award cycle. NCTCOG utilizes two different processes to award these funds. Two percent of the funding is set aside for strategic partnerships. Ninety-eight percent of the funding is available annually through the Programs of Projects process.

Approximately \$194.6 million of the Programs of Projects funding for Fiscal Year 2024 was utilized by transit authorities. Of this \$194.6 million, 64 percent was utilized by Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), 20 percent by Trinity Metro and 6 percent by the Denton County Transit Authority (DCTA). The remaining 10 percent of funding was utilized by all other transit providers.

For a complete list of federal funding allocations for transit providers in North Central Texas, visit: www.publicinput.com/nctcogAugust24.

Summary of Online Review and Comment Topics

Proposed Modifications to the List of Funded Projects handout:

<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/2fd0361e-1b0a-4988-96af-9a2d3dd23f05/Proposed-Modifications-to-the-List-of-Funded-Projects.pdf>

A comprehensive list of funded transportation projects through 2024 is maintained in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), with committed funds from federal, State and local sources. To maintain an accurate project listing, this document is updated on a regular basis.

The current modification cycle includes project updates and funding adjustments for transportation initiatives in Collin, Dallas, Ellis, Kaufman, Rockwall and Tarrant counties. Additionally, financial adjustments related to public transportation services managed by the Denton County Transportation Authority are also included.

COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE MEETING

Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Grant Award Additions to Mobility Plan

Scott Rohrman, Citizen

A. Data Centers

Question: Data centers are coming to Dallas-Fort Worth. They all must have generators, and those generators create emissions. With our air quality, I'm concerned the federal government may start trying to regulate data centers coming to North Texas. Is that something NCTCOG is looking into?

Summary of response by Jared Wright: Yes, that is something NCTCOG is looking into. Data centers are a significant source of energy consumption, and NCTCOG works closely with Oncor to make sure they're aware of the centers coming online, so they can plan for that additional grid load.

Summary of response by Dan Kessler: We need to be more informed on the data center revolution. You're correct about the energy loads. Comanche Peak is building a second nuclear reactor, which is something we need to understand better since they're a huge source of power for the metroplex. Some of the data center experts we've spoken with have discussed the nearby solar fields, but they acknowledge that these fields probably won't generate nearly enough power.

Sunny Lindsey, Citizen

A. Public safety at EV charging stations

Question: In any of the grants discussed, is there any opportunity or investment for cities looking at public safety aspects for EV stations? My city's fire chief announced that he is going to increase the budget substantially due to battery fires and storage.

Summary of response by Jared Wright: Not with these grants specifically, but that is an area of concern for our team. Our staff is working a lot with local first responders to make sure they're aware of any available training.

Summary of response by Dan Kessler: NCTCOG has an Emergency Preparedness Department that focuses on that type of issue. There is a grant we're pursuing that would focus on our local emergency responders and necessary training.

2050 Demographics for New Mobility Plan

Scott Rohrman, Citizen

A. Water

Question: In your demographic presentation, you mentioned water, land and affordable housing jobs. Does NCTCOG look at water or is it some other entity? If our population hits 12 million people in 2050, will we have enough drinking water?

Summary of response by Dan Kessler: NCTCOG is an agency that has a monitoring role with water. We work quite a bit with the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) and have a demographic type of back and forth with them to make sure we're in the same place. Our Environment and Development Department is more focused on storm water than water supply issues, which is a general issue that's carried between local governments in the state. With our work with TWDB and our forecast, we will have water to serve the growth projected out to 2070. There are a lot of variables that go into that, though, like the construction of reservoirs and the reuse of water. Water availability is probably the biggest constraint we're looking at.

Frank Wise, Citizen

A. ForwardDallas

Question: In your forecast work, was the concept ForwardDallas included? Have we looked at the pluses and minuses?

Summary of response by Dan Kessler: Thank you for the question. About a month ago, we held a workshop for local governments, and representatives from Dallas who are part of the ForwardDallas initiative were in attendance. Our staff has been actively monitoring the progress of this initiative. We have encouraged Dallas to explore opportunities for higher densities as part of their planning. In response, we asked them to share their strategies, as they are still in the early stages of planning and moving toward the implementation phase. We're intrigued by their efforts, which align with the goals we believe all cities should consider.

Sunny Lindsey, Citizen

A. Land use

Comment: You mentioned land use as a factor used to obtain some of your figures. I would like to express concern about relying too heavily on that data, as it tends to change frequently, especially at the smaller, local level.

Summary of response by Dan Kessler: That's a great observation. You must start somewhere, which is why there's a dedicated team focused on development monitoring, tasked with capturing and tracking every development happening in cities. We rely on cities to share updates with us because local insight is invaluable. One of our key tasks is to constantly monitor these changes. While the official review happens every four years, our team works on this daily to ensure we're capturing the developments you mentioned.

Phyllis Silver, Citizen

A. Dallas stock market

Question: I've heard so much in the media about Dallas possibly getting a stock market and I was wondering if anybody would want to comment. What impact would that have on our infrastructure?

Summary of response by Dan Kessler: Thank you for your comment. I was reviewing an article discussing Hillwood Urban's \$500 million Goldman Sachs Tower, which is expected to accommodate 5,000 bankers and investors in downtown Dallas. The article predicts that Dallas could become the second-largest financial hub in the United States upon completion of this project. Whether this will lead to Dallas becoming a major stock market center is beyond my expertise. However, Addison presents a unique challenge for planners. It is a community where the daytime population of workers significantly exceeds the nighttime residential population, making it a substantial employment center for the region. In response to your question, the possibilities for Dallas are extensive. Remarkable developments continue to unfold, so it is important not to underestimate the potential.

Transit Strategic Partnerships: Recommended Projects

Scott Rohrman, Citizen

A. Operation funding

Question: On page three of Gypsy's presentation, it says projects "cannot be used for operating shortfalls." Then, in Shawn's presentation, it mentions funding for operations. Why is there funding for operations in one place and not the other?

Summary of response by Gypsy Gavia: The reasoning behind the discrepancy is because they are two different programs. Transit Strategic Partnerships is specifically for specialized projects, so it's a very small bucket that has been taken from the regional bucket. Shawn covered the bulk of the region's funding for some agencies operating as an eligible item.

B. Transit authorities and providers

Question: Your presentation mentions eligible applicants. What's the difference between transit authorities and public transit providers?

Summary of response by Gypsy Gavia: Our regional transit authorities include Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), Trinity Metro and Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA). Transportation providers refer to services managed locally with federal funding, like Star Transit in Kaufman.

Greg Scott, Citizen

A. Funding

Question: Can you disclose how much money is awarded per cycle? Is it awarded once or twice a year? Is it capital operating planning?

Summary of response by Gypsy Gavia: This is a complex question. We publish the currently available funds on our website. Mathematically, for example, as Shawn mentioned, if there is \$100 million, 2 percent of that amount is set aside each fiscal year for specific projects. This set-

aside amount is then added to a general fund that is available for any eligible project that meets the established criteria. However, if we approach a point where the funding is about to expire, instead of returning it to the federal government, we reallocate it into our transit fund. While these funds are interconnected, 2 percent is consistently set aside each year and added to the general fund. The updated balances are always available on our website. The way we approach capital projects also differs; under State Transit Assistance (STA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidelines, service contracts can qualify as capital projects. We focus on new regional projects that enhance services, but these are not considered operating costs by the FTA. Only services that meet specific criteria are eligible, but we don't cover typical 50/50 operating costs.

Other

Scott Rohrman, Citizen

A. DART

Comment: I've been facing challenges with DART for several years. Living in North Dallas and working downtown, I see dozens of buses daily, often with just two or three riders. In my work in South Dallas, I've found transportation to be a major issue. I've heard from students at Lincoln High School report it takes two hours to travel from South Dallas to downtown using public transit. Our current system is inefficient, with a high cost per rider. If we could start from scratch, I would suggest building a tunnel from Hutchins through downtown to Celina, with branches extending from there. I recently tried to use DART to get to the courthouse but ended up waiting 45 minutes before deciding to drive.

Summary of response by Chris Klaus: You mentioned that many people may share the same sentiment, but DART is actively working to address these issues. Since the pandemic, transit has not fully recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Although there has been some improvement, we acknowledge that it is still lagging behind where it was and where it could be. NCTCOG is currently undertaking a significant initiative, Transit 2.0, which we hope will provide answers to many of these questions and guide our future direction. Transit will be crucial in moving the forecasted demographics throughout the region.

Summary of response by Dan Kessler: I am confident we do not have the lowest ridership numbers. Chris was correct in pointing out that COVID certainly had an impact. Our ridership models for the DART lines have actually been remarkably accurate. The Central Line and Stemmons Line corridors do carry a substantial amount of ridership. When examining the rail system's design, it's clear that it provides additional accessibility in high-congestion corridors, such as Stemmons Freeway. The key to effective rail service lies in having higher densities at the destination end. As a region, we've invested billions of dollars in this light rail system. Now, we need to explore mixed-use development and higher densities to maximize its potential. As our population approaches 10 million, travel forecasts indicate people will begin to see the benefits of the DART system, despite longer travel times on congested roads like Stemmons, which could extend to an hour and a half. By the time we reach 12 million people, regional congestion will be substantial. We are reaching the point where freeway expansion in Dallas and Tarrant counties is no longer feasible. There's limited right of way, and construction costs are extraordinarily high. We understand the public's frustrations, especially regarding buses, which is a very valid concern. NCTCOG is actively evaluating the appropriate services needed. DART, Trinity Metro and DCTA are all open to these discussions.

Greg Scott, Citizen

A. Comments at public meetings

Question: What is the purpose of these meetings? What do you want comments on? Why are these specific topics being covered today?

Summary of response by Chris Klaus: Some of today's presentations require upcoming action from our policy body, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC). Before the RTC takes action, staff are required to seek public comment to refine our work.

Summary of response by Dan Kessler: There are no bad ideas. When we engage with the public, we want to hear about the topics we've presented as well as anything else on your mind. Transportation is a complex issue, especially in a rapidly growing region like ours. You, as users, experience it every day. So, when Chris reaches that point in the meeting, we welcome comments on any subject.

Sunny Lindsey, Citizen

A. Transit schedules

Comment: On DART, DCTA, and small micro transit, I personally have used all three. I would love it if someday DCTA and DART could line up their schedules effectively.

Summary of response by Dan Kessler: Chris mentioned the Transit 2.0 initiative. One of the key topics discussed by the RTC is their policy on public transit. This policy emphasizes all transit agencies should function as one unified system from the user's perspective, appearing as a single agency. NCTCOG is committed to this vision, though we recognize there are sometimes physical, systemic or financial constraints.

B. 20 percent opposition

Question: The State legislature had looked at changing the rules on the 20 percent opposition. Has NCTCOG done any research or work to help with that?

Summary of response by Dan Kessler: I'm not aware of any initiatives we've been involved in at the local level on that, but I really appreciate the point. I'd like to learn more about it and its implications.

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

Email

Thomas Wall Simmons, Citizen

You are having your meeting in the largest Texas city without mass transit.

John and Trish Donaghey, Citizens

Dear NCTCOG,

Our local paper said the new plan was to expand FM 982 south of Princeton from a two-lane farm road into a four or six-lane divided highway, with construction starting in 2027.

Questions: What are the plans to avoid total gridlock at the three two-lane bridges going west and east across Lake Lavon (aka Lavon Lake)? How will a six-lane highway fit onto two-lane bridges?! Are there plans to construct three new parallel bridges from (1) Culleoka to Branch, (2) from Branch to Lucas, and (3) from Lucas to Lucas via FM 982 south to FM 546 west to FM 3286 west (aka E. Lucas Rd.) to Country Club Rd. in Allen, TX? So, with three new bridges parallel to the old bridges, three two-lane bridges could be going one way, and the other three two-lane bridges could be going the other.

Concerned property owners for last 45 years along FM 982,
M/M John E. & Trish Donaghey

Text

Anonymous, Citizen

As a citizen I am concerned with many cities in the region showing interest in reducing transit funding at this important moment of growth. Does the 2050 plan account for this? It seems that we not only need to maintain our current funding, but substantially increase funding and improve land use to make this immense growth manageable.

Social Media

Facebook

1. Mobility 2050 demographics, Transit Strategic Partnerships and more for review/comment. —
NCTCOG Transportation Department



It's great to host a public input meeting for public transportation in a city with no public transportation. NCTCOG needs to have public meetings where the public can get to them. If you live in Fort Worth Arlington is a long walk & taxi costs too much. The public needs to be able to get there. Trinity Metro & Dallas Area Rapid Transit (Official DART page) are about to raise our fares where we will have to sacrifice our jobs because it costs too much to ride their systems. Imagine being retired & paying \$126 a month to ride the

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (Official DART page) system out of your \$800/month check. It's getting too expensive to just live. — Thomas Reid

Thank you for your comment. Our public meetings are hybrid and can also be watched live on www.publicinput.com/nctcogAugust24. You can comment live on that page. You can also participate by phone, text and email. — NCTCOG Transportation Department