

AGENDA

**Regional Transportation Council
Thursday, June 13, 2024
North Central Texas Council of Governments**

**1:00 pm Full RTC Business Agenda
(NCTCOG Guest Secured Wireless Connection Password: rangers!)**

Pledge to the United States and Texas Flags

- 1:00 – 1:10** 1. **Opportunity for Public Comment on Today’s Agenda**
 Information Minutes: 10
Item Summary: Members of the public may comment on any item(s) on today’s agenda at this time. If speaking, please complete a Speaker Request Card, available at the meeting, and provide it to the North Central Texas Council of Governments designated staff person. A maximum of three (3) minutes is permitted per speaker. At the conclusion of this item, no further opportunities for public comment will be provided for the duration of the meeting.
Background: N/A
- 1:10 – 1:15** 2. **Approval of May 9, 2024, Minutes**
 Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 5
Presenter: Gyna Bivens, RTC Chair
Item Summary: Approval of the May 9, 2024, meeting minutes contained in [Electronic Item 2](#) will be requested.
Background: N/A
- 1:15 – 1:20** 3. **Consent Agenda**
 Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 5
- 3.1. **Proposed Amendments to the Mobility 2045 - 2022 Update**
Presenter: Brendon Wheeler, NCTCOG
Item Summary: Staff will request Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval to amend the Mobility 2045 Update with the inclusion of one and the removal of two non-regionally significant roadway projects.
Background: A roadway project is proposed for addition to [Mobility 2045: the Metropolitan Transportation Plan for North Central Texas – 2022 Update](#) for the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to advance planning and design activities. These projects are not yet ready to be considered for inclusion in the Transportation Improvement

Program (TIP) and are only proposed to be included as a part of the system of recommendations in the Mobility 2045 Update at this time. As these projects are considered “non-regionally significant” (designation for air quality purposes), their addition to the Plan does not impact transportation air quality conformity. Additionally, two non-regionally significant roadway projects are proposed for removal from the Mobility 2045 Update for financial constraints. Removal of these projects does not preclude them from being re-added at a later date. Fact sheets of the proposed additions can be found in [Electronic Item 3.1](#).

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Roadway

1:20 – 1:35

4. **Orientation to Agenda/Director of Transportation Report**

Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 15
Presenter: Michael Morris, NCTCOG

1. High Speed Rail: Press Releases, Article, Correspondence, and Schedule of Workshop ([Electronic Item 4.1](#))
2. Current Hold on Regional Transportation Council Policy – Temporary Suspension of Dynamic Pricing of Managed Lanes During Reconstruction
3. Regional Transportation Council 50th Anniversary Planning and Meeting: August 8, 2024
4. Transit 2.0 Implementation: Next Steps ([Electronic Item 4.2](#))
5. Friends of the Safety Committee Meeting
6. Progress North Texas 2024 (Handout)
7. Funding for Regional Tire Collection Events ([Electronic Item 4.3](#))
8. Auto Occupancy/High – Occupancy Vehicle Quarterly Subsidy Report ([Electronic Item 4.4](#))
9. Air Quality Project Spotlight – Hydrogen Planning Project ([Electronic Item 4.5](#))
10. Air Quality Funding Opportunities (www.nctcog.org/aqfunding)
11. Upcoming Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Events (www.dfwcleancities.org/events)
12. April – May Public Comment Report ([Electronic Item 4.6](#))
13. May Public Meeting Minutes ([Electronic Item 4.7](#))

14. June Online Input Opportunity Notice ([Electronic Item 4.8](#))
15. Recent News Articles ([Electronic Item 4.9](#))
16. Recent Correspondence ([Electronic Item 4.10](#))
17. Recent Press Releases ([Electronic Item 4.11](#))

1:35 – 1:45

5. **Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program Grant Application Partnership for the Cotton Belt Trail**

Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Karla Windsor, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will request approval of a partnership with Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) to submit a grant application for funding to construct Phase 3a of the Cotton Belt Trail along the Silver Line rail project.

Background: The DART Silver Line rail project is coordinating the regionally significant parallel Cotton Belt Trail providing pedestrian and bicycle access to rail stations in seven cities across three counties from Dallas Fort Worth International Airport to Plano. Accommodation for the approximate 26-mile regional trail was included as part of DART's planning and construction of the commuter rail corridor. A \$12 million federal grant application will be submitted for trail construction consisting of nearly three miles of additional trail sections, trail bridges, signals, and street crossings in portions of Addison, Coppell, and Dallas. Developed by North Central Texas Council of Governments staff, a grant application will be submitted by DART to the Federal Highway Administration Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP) to advance Phase 3a construction by leveraging existing federal and local funding currently programmed in the Transportation Improvement Program for trail construction within the application area. Regional Toll Revenue funding of \$4.3 million will be requested as a local contribution to support this leveraging of requested ATIIP federal funds. If awarded funding, DART will procure a contractor and manage construction of the trail which is primarily within rail right-of-way. Staff will provide an overview of the DART partnership grant application and funding recommendations to construct the Phase 3a sections of this priority regional trail corridor. Additional information is provided in [Electronic Item 5](#).

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Bike/Ped+, Safety

1:45 – 1:55 6.

Air Quality and Safety Demonstration Projects

Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Chris Klaus, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will request Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of three demonstration projects, including expansion of regional Car Care Clinics to include a vehicle safety check, use of technology to determine potential metal plate fraud in the region, and a heavy-duty diesel vehicle emission tampering assessment.

Background: Efforts continue to be pursued to reduce transportation impacts on regional air quality and vehicle safety. Three projects will total \$1 million in funding from Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) and RTC Local funds. In an effort to reach the Department of Transportation's Vision Zero goal of eliminating vehicle related fatalities by 2050, there is interest to continue public education regarding the importance of proper vehicle safety component operation and maintenance to decrease roadway crashes and fatalities. Vehicle safety assessments will be integrated into existing Car Care Awareness emissions efforts through partnerships with vendors and coordination in replacing safety components in vehicles as needed. Staff plan to implement the project in Fiscal Year 2025 using RTC Local funds. While vehicle temporary paper plates will phase out beginning July 1, 2025, the potential for fraud remains with existing metal license plates. The vehicle emissions inspection and license plate project will coordinate with local law enforcement on the utilization of cameras that can read license plates, determine rate of fraudulent plates, and identify next steps as necessary. This project will start in Fiscal Year 2025 using RTR funds. The ease of which heavy-duty diesel vehicles can have their emissions systems tampered with and disabled has led to potential widespread engine tampering. The truck assessment and goods movement program will evaluate the severity and impacts of tampered trucks operating in the region, assess air chemistry modeling and regional air quality monitors disparity, and determine options to eliminate these illegal practices. Staff plan to start the project in Fiscal Year 2025 using RTR funds. These initiatives are an extension of clean vehicle efforts listed as Weight-of-Evidence in the current State Implementation Plan. [Electronic Item 6](#) provides additional details.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Air Quality, Safety

1:55 – 2:05

7. **2025 – 2028 Transportation Improvement Program Development**

Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Christie Gotti, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will request Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) document, including the final listing of RTC commitments.

Background: A new TIP is developed every two years through a cooperative effort between the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), local governments, and transportation authorities. The TIP is a staged, multi-year listing of transportation projects with committed funding from federal, State, and local sources within the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area. [Electronic Item 7.1](#) contains an overview of the TIP development process and schedule. The financially constrained 2025-2028 TIP Document and final STIP listings are available at the following weblink: <https://www.nctcog.org/trans/funds/tip/transportation-improvement-program-docs/2025-2028tip>. Projects in FY2025-2028 will be included in the 2025-2028 TIP, and projects in FY2029 and later will be placed in Appendix D of the TIP. Projects in FY2024 and earlier are provided but will not be included in the 2025-2028 TIP. The resolution contained in [Electronic Item 7.2](#) affirms the RTC's approval of the 2025-2028 TIP listings and will be used to transmit the document to TxDOT. <https://nctcog.org/getattachment/06b4691a-3cb9-452b-85d3-ed585d434284/List-of-Changes-to-2025-2028-Double-Entry-for-Web.pdf> contains a list of substantive changes made to the project listings since the beginning of the public involvement period.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Roadway, Transit

2:05 – 2:10

8. **Air Quality Status Report**

Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 5

Presenter: Jenny Narvaez, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will provide information regarding the region's 2024 ozone season and the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recent change of the fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) annual standard.

Background: The 2024 ozone season began on March 1 for North Central Texas, 9 and 10 county nonattainment areas and runs through the end of November. Concurrently, the

region remains in nonattainment for both the 2008 and 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone. Daily ozone information, including current conditions and forecasts, is provided at: <https://www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/air/ozone>. On February 7, 2024, the EPA revised the level of the PM_{2.5} primary health-based annual NAAQS from 12.0 micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m³) to a level of 9.0 µg/m.³ This change leads to the potential for Dallas and Tarrant counties to be in nonattainment when final designations are made in 2026. More details can be found in [Electronic Item 8](#).

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Air Quality

2:10 – 2:20

9. **2050 Demographics for New Mobility Plan**

Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Dan Kessler, NCTCOG

Item Summary: North Central Texas Council of Government (NCTCOG) staff will present Population and Employment Regional Control Totals for the year 2050 to support the upcoming development of the Mobility 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Background: Federal Metropolitan Planning regulations require that demographic forecasts to support the Metropolitan Transportation Plan are evaluated every four years consistent with the four-year Metropolitan Transportation Plan development cycle. One of the initial steps in NCTCOG's demographic forecasting process is the review of Regional Control Totals for population and employment. Forecasts from external sources have historically been utilized to estimate these regionwide estimates of future growth in the region. Over the past year, NCTCOG Research and Information Systems (RIS) and Transportation staff have completed an analysis of various control total forecasts. Results of this analysis and the recommended 2050 Regional Control Total for Population and Employment will be presented. Additional details can be found in [Electronic Item 9](#).

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Roadway, Transit

2:20 – 2:25

10. **Updates on the Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Coalition**

Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 5

Presenter: Lori Clark, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will present an update on the status of the Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Coalition (DFWCC) and highlight opportunities to get involved, including an upcoming process to be redesignated by the Department of Energy.

Background: Since 1995, the North Central Texas Council of Governments has been the host organization for DFWCC, a US Department of Energy initiative to reduce total energy impacts in the transportation sector. DFWCC recently completed a major data-gathering effort to compile impacts of local fleet efforts in using alternative fuels, reducing idling, and taking other measures to improve fuel and energy efficiency. The Coalition has also established a Technical Advisory Committee and strategic plan. Finally, the Department of Energy has notified NCTCOG staff that the Coalition is due for a review and redesignation this fall. [Electronic Item 10](#) provides more information.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Air Quality

2:25 – 2:30

11. **Election of Regional Transportation Council Officers**

Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 5

Presenter: Gary Slagel, Nominating Subcommittee Chair

Item Summary: Approval of Regional Transportation Council (RTC) officers for the next 12-month period will be requested.

Background: According to the RTC Bylaws and Operating Procedures, the officers of RTC are elected to serve for a term of one year. The Nominating Subcommittee is charged with providing a slate of officers to the full Council for consideration in June of each year. The Nominating Subcommittee is tasked with confirming that the current Vice Chair and Secretary should move up to the office of Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, and nominate a new Secretary. The Nominating Subcommittee, in its deliberations, shall address issues of diversity, including sensitivity to gender, ethnicity, and geography in its recommendations. Officers shall be elected public officials appointed by and from the governing body of the member government. The slate of officers shall reflect leadership in rough proportion to the revenue distribution between the Eastern and Western Subregions. This will not be measured on a year-to-year basis but will be

aggregated over longer periods of time. The new officers will begin their terms at the conclusion of the June meeting.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Administrative

12. **Progress Reports**

Action Possible Action Information

Item Summary: Progress Reports are provided in the items below.

- RTC Attendance ([Electronic Item 12.1](#))
- STTC Attendance and Minutes ([Electronic Item 12.2](#))

13. **Other Business (Old or New)**: This item provides an opportunity for members to bring items of interest before the group.

14. **Future Agenda Items**: This item provides an opportunity for members to bring items of future interest before the Council.

15. **Next Meeting**: The next meeting of the Regional Transportation Council is scheduled for **1:00 pm, Thursday, July 11, 2024, in the Transportation Council Room.**

MINUTES

**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL
May 9, 2024**

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) met on Thursday, May 9, 2024, at 1:00 pm in the Transportation Council Room of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). The following members or representatives were present: Daniel Alemán, Bruce Arfsten, Rick Bailey, Adam Bazaldua, Gyna Bivens, Ceason Clemens, Michael Crain, Theresa Daniel, Andy Eads, Michael Evans, Vernon Evans, Gary Fickes, George Fuller, Raul Gonzalez, Lane Grayson, Mojoy Haddad, Sharla Horton (representing Jeff Davis), Clay Lewis Jenkins, Ron Jensen, Brandon Jones, Brad LaMorgese, Terry Lynne (representing Steve Babick), Cara Mendelsohn, Ed Moore, John Muns, Omar Narvaez, Manny Ramirez, Jim Ross, David Salazar, Chris Schulmeister, Gary Slagel, Jeremy Tompkins, Duncan Webb, and Chad West.

Others present at the meeting were: Vickie Alexander, Steve Anderson, Renee Arnold, Micah Baker, Carli Baylor, Natalie Bettger, Alberta Blair, Stephanie Boardingham, Jason Brown, Carolyn Burns, Laura Cadena, Molly Carroll, Angie Carson, Jeff Coalter, Dawn Dalrymple, David Dryden, Chris Drysen, Mike Eastland, Chad Edwards, Janet Fortel, Efrain Frias, Jillian Giles, Rebekah Gongora, Barry Gordon, Christie Gotti, Tony Hartzel, Robert Hinkle, Caleb Humphrey, Richard Isarraraz-Garcia, Joel James, Yagnesh Jarmarwaca, Amy Johnson, Dan Kessler, Frances Key, Gus Khankarli, Tony Kimmey, Ken Kirkpatrick, Andy Kissig, Chris Klaus, Tracey Knight, Dan Lamers, Christopher Lee, Eron Linn, April Mann, Dillon Maroney, Jon McKenzie, Kalon Melton, Erin Moore, Michael Morris, Jenny Narvaez, Mark Nelson, Dylan Niles, Brinton Payne, Michael Peters, James Powell, Lauren Prieur, Vercie Pruitt-Jenkins, Andrei Radu, Abbas Rastandeh, Zahra Ricketts, Kathryn Rotter, Sarah Sargent, Gwen Schaulis, Walter Shumac III, Vitorio Slade, Toni Stehling, Jonathan Toffer, Lauren Trimble, Whitney Vandiver, Dan Vedral, Brendon Wheeler, Amanda Wilson, and Brian Wilson.

1. **Opportunity for Public Comment on Today's Agenda:** This item allows members of the public an opportunity to comment on agenda items. Regional Transportation Council Chair Gyna Bivens asked if there were any public comments. No members of the public chose to speak at the meeting or provide written comments.
2. **Approval of April 11, 2024, Minutes:** The minutes of the April 11, 2024, meeting were approved as submitted in Electronic Item 2. Jim Ross (M); Daniel Alemán (S). The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Consent Agenda:** There were no items on the Consent Agenda.
4. **Orientation to Agenda/Director of Transportation Report:** Michael Morris recognized Mayor Barry Gordon, City of Duncanville for his service on the Regional Transportation Council. The mayor, who will be leaving office, has served the RTC and his community with distinction with his commitment to public service, the community, and to the people within the region. Michael noted that North Richland Hill's Mayor Oscar Trevino was scheduled to be recognized for his support and 20 plus years of service, but Mayor Trevino was unable to attend the RTC meeting because he was attending the funeral services of North Richland Hills Assistant Police Chief Kevin Palmer. Michael expressed condolences to the family and all those impacted by Assistant Chief Palmer's passing. Mayor Trevino's long service to both the Regional Transportation Council and to his community will be recognized in the near future. Michael introduced Chair Bivens to announce the Nominating Subcommittee

appointments: Gary Slagel (Chair), Lane Grayson (Vice Chair), Elizabeth Beck, J.D. Clark, Theresa Daniel, Michael Evans, Ed Moore, Omar Narvaez, and Manny Ramirez. The subcommittee will present officer recommendations for the 2024-2025 term at the June RTC meeting. The North Central Texas Council of Governments and Regional Transportation Council will celebrate its 50th anniversary as a metropolitan planning organization with a luncheon on August 8, 2024, during the Irving Transportation, Infrastructure and Economic Investment Summit and prior to the monthly RTC meeting. Michael mentioned that Transit 2.0 is up and running with consultants on board, and the tasks that don't require a lot of policy direction have begun. The tasks that involve communication with transportation authority board members are being scheduled. Dan Kessler will present in the next few months on the new demographic and employment forecasts for the year 2050 that will be used for the new mobility plan. The Regional Transportation Council will be the policy review group of that effort. Legislative items will be coming out in late summer/early fall. Michael announced during the meeting that staff was planning to schedule a high-speed rail workshop in July prior to the RTC meeting but was notified during the meeting that the City of Dallas representatives would be in recess in July, Michael noted that staff would poll the members regarding their availability to attend the workshop. In the policy direction and future of both high-speed rail, Michael was requested to speak at the high-speed rail conference in Washington, DC. Michael acknowledged Commissioner Fikes, who brought the importance of the high-speed rail to RTC twenty years ago. Michael mentioned that he had recently attended several press conferences and ribbon cuttings.

5. **Reconnecting Communities Update:** Karla Windsor briefed the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) that the United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) reached out in February and asked if the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) would take \$80 million of the requested \$95 million, with assurance we could still complete the scope of work. Staff requested the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) to make up the difference of the \$15 million funding gap. This would allow the RTC to not have any increase in local commitment to its project partners and would allow the four deck projects to move forward. Karla mentioned slight adjustments may be needed in funding as the projects go to construction and as they're let, but staff would know more at a later date. Currently, work is underway to develop a letter of assignment with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) as a project partner that will be the lead contracting and implementing agency. All of the projects are over interstate systems or state facilities. Karla provided a breakdown of the revised allocation of federal funds for the funding for the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) region's "Bridging Highway Divides for the Dallas Fort-Worth Communities" application: Klyde Warren Park (Phase 2) – expanding to West Saint Paul Street for \$20 million; Southern Gateway (Phase 2) for \$25 million; Interstate Highway (IH) 30: Farmers Market/Three Fingers for \$20 million; and McKinney State Highway 5 for \$15 million. Karla noted for the IH 30 project, Farmers Market/Three Fingers, in February 2024, the RTC approved a \$30 million in Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) loan on this facility, instead staff recommends the RTC add \$5 million needed for the project and retract the loan, since the federal discretionary grant was awarded.

A motion was made to approve an additional \$15 million in Surface Transportation Block Grant funds to include in the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods awarded project funding, and administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Statewide TIP, as well as other planning and administrative documents to include the amended funding. Raul Gonzalez (M); Cara Mendelsohn (S). The motion passed unanimously.

6. **Project Status Report: Fiscal Year 2024 Project Tracking and Metropolitan Planning Organization Milestone Policy Round 2:** Brian Dell presented a request for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of various updates to Milestone Policy project deadlines. Brian introduced the two components of the Project Status Report: the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Milestone Policy Round 2 Update and FY2024 Project Tracking Update. The MPO Milestone Policy focuses on projects funded for 10 plus years that have not gone to construction. FY2024 Project Tracking focuses on projects slated for implementation in FY2024, and highlights potential problems in order to prevent delays, provides earlier monitoring, and enables the RTC to take corrective actions to avoid accumulation of carryover balances. Brian mentioned there were eight projects on the MPO Milestone Policy list that have not gone to construction totaling \$272 million. Of those, one project was scheduled for letting in FY2024 and seven are scheduled for letting in FY2025 or beyond. He briefly went through the risk ratings of the projects. Brian provided a breakdown of the three projects requiring action. The first project is a Union Pacific (UP) Railroad Crossing Project in Haltom City. In 2021, Haltom City informed the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) that work had started at the Haltom Road location and work at Glenview Drive was pending approval by UP. As a result, the project was not included in the final Milestone Policy Round 2 RTC action item. NCTCOG was later informed that work had not started at either location. The project is also on the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) inactive list due to no requests for reimbursement being submitted for over a year. Staff's recommendations were to put the project on the Milestone Policy list for tracking and require Haltom City's City Council to reaffirm its commitment to the project with a resolution (must include confirmation that local match is still available and a schedule by which the City commits to implement the project), and NCTCOG will bring back an item at a later date to request action on a letting deadline. The second project is Riverfront Boulevard in Dallas County. An updated letting deadline of December 2023 was approved in August 2022, but franchise utility coordination and review further delayed the project and led to the deadline being missed and a funding shortfall of \$14,810,939 to accrue. Staff's recommendation was to approve \$11,984,662 of additional Dallas County Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) funds to address the shortfall, with Dallas County contributing an additional \$2,000,000 and City of Dallas contributing \$826,277, and to extend the letting deadline to December 2024. The third project, US 377 from South of Farmers Market 1171 to Crawford Road was unfunded when the Milestone Policy Round 2 list was approved by the RTC. Therefore, a deadline was not established. Since then, the project was funded via the 2023 10-Year Plan Update. The staff's recommendation was to establish a letting deadline of September 2027 for this project based on feedback from TxDOT-Dallas. Brian briefly went through the four funding categories being tracked as part of the FY2024 Project Tracking initiative. The first category, Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funding, has \$58 million available with \$51.4 million obligated. It was noted that the obligations were made up of mostly some of the large dollar transit projects and that more than half of the projects have been pushed to later years. The second category, Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funding, has \$91.7 million of available funding with \$102.7 million obligated (including funding that is classified as Advanced Construction). Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TASA) funding has \$58.3 million available with \$26.3 million obligated. The fourth category, Carbon Reduction Program, a new category added through the last transportation funding bill, has \$55 million available with \$35.3 million obligated. Additional details were provided in Electronic Item 6. Commissioner Webb asked what kind of deadlines are being planned for Haltom City to pass the resolution. Brian noted that no specific deadline has been established, but staff intends to bring back an item sometime in the fall. A question was asked about what has caused the Haltom City project to be delayed for such a long time. Michael Morris noted that

it is likely due to staff turnover and the complex nature of federal funding. He also emphasized the importance of getting projects like this implemented in a timely manner, so inflation does not continue to drive costs up.

A motion was made to approve of staff's recommendations detailed in slides 6-8 of the presentation in Electronic Item 6, and to allow staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), along with other administrative/planning documents as needed to incorporate any changes to affected projects. Theresa Daniels (M); Adam Bazaldua (S). The motion passed unanimously.

7. **Regional Transportation Council Policy – Temporary Suspension of Dynamic Pricing of Managed Lanes During Reconstruction:** Dan Lamers introduced a policy allowing for the suspension of dynamic pricing of managed lanes on the region's freeway system that have offered motorists an opportunity, a choice, and an option of travel within some congested borders by paying a toll to be able to go at a very reliable speed and travel time again. In fact, some of them have been extremely successful within our region so some of them are required now to be expanded. That is the case with two corridors right now; one is the North Tarrant Express and the other is Interstate Highway 35 East in in the Dallas district north of LBJ. The current managed lanes pricing policy, last updated in 2016, specifies that dynamic pricing with market-based tolls be applied after initial opening. Dan provided an example, if construction is underway, the dynamic prices change based on the congestion in the managed lanes. If construction occurs within the managed lanes, that certainly could reduce capacity and cause congestion. The algorithms essentially increase the cost of those managed lanes and that is not an ideal scenario. The congestion in the general-purpose lanes could drive additional travelers to the managed lanes, causing the tolls to spike as well. In order to prevent those types of circumstances, Dan encouraged consideration of the proposed Policy R24-01 which would allow the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) District Engineer to temporarily suspend dynamic pricing during times of reconstruction as safety and potential driver confusion are primary considerations. Following reconstruction, dynamic pricing should be restored. Considerations for the temporary rate structure include the type of reconstruction, with an adjustment likely needed only under full facility reconstruction, the length of duration of construction activities, consistency of rates by facility direction during corresponding time periods and day of week, the need for temporary signage, and the need to continue revenue collection in compliance with federal or State laws and regulations. A draft of the policy was included in Electronic Item 7. Dan mentioned it would also be recommended that TxDOT engage in a public outreach campaign to ensure that everybody knows that these corridors will be operating differently during the construction period. There was general discussion of peak periods in each direction, off peak in each direction, and the need for TxDOT to try to have the peak direction rates be similar due to being critical for safety reasons and to make sure the consumer doesn't see a spike in rates.
8. **Public Involvement and Mobility 2050 Outreach:** Amanda Wilson provided an overview on Public Involvement and Mobility 2050. This presentation was requested the previous month by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) after the initial Mobility 2050 presentation in order to receive more information about public engagement efforts, specifically related to individuals who do not speak English. Amanda briefed the Council on the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), public engagement strategies, and plans. The public participation plan, a federally mandated requirement for all MPOs, guides the department's public involvement efforts and outlines the MPO's responsibilities to inform and

engage individuals and communities. The plan was last updated in November 2022, though that update pertained solely to the public comments made during RTC meetings. The last major revision occurred in 2020, with a focus on increased engagement with community organizations and more virtual education and involvement initiatives, recognizing the transition of public involvement towards online platforms. The plan is available on the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) website. Amanda mentioned that the plan covers federal responsibilities, procedures, strategies for engaging the public, and methods for evaluating efforts. She noted that NCTCOG has a separate language assistance plan, included as an appendix in the public participation plan, to address the need for language assistance. Amanda provided the guiding principles included in the plan: consistent and comprehensive communication, commitment to diversity and inclusiveness, consultation with committees, and collaboration with audiences and stakeholders. Amanda noted that federal law specifically requires consultation with certain stakeholder organizations for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Mobility 2050. The plan's goals aim to inform and educate the public, engage diverse audiences, and encourage participation. Public feedback is crucial for long-range mobility plans to ensure inclusivity and identify areas for improvement. The strategies are outlined in the Public Participation Plan. Amanda highlighted newer opportunities, including a toolkit for sharing information about Mobility 2050 and engaging community networks, as reaching the large media market is challenging. NCTCOG aims to connect with trusted community organizations. The language assistance plan utilizes a four-factor analysis to determine when and how to translate materials, considering: the number and proportion of individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) for a program, activity, or service; the frequency with which LEP individuals interact with the program; the importance of the program, activity, or service to people's lives; and the available resources and costs to provide language assistance. Amanda provided examples of general public outreach efforts, such as websites with automatic Google Translate functionality, publications like the Citizens Guide and fact sheets in Spanish and other languages, and [NCTCOG's Public Input platform](#). Amy Johnson stated that NCTCOG is guided by key principles for outreach, tailored for multilingual communication: seeking meaningful input early in the planning process, engaging the appropriate stakeholders, and focusing on problem-solving. To target languages, NCTCOG produces and maintains an Environmental Justice Index, utilizing the top two categories of low-income and total minority populations to determine where and how to target outreach. Supplemental layers, including limited English proficiency data, indicate that the top two languages in the region besides English are Spanish and Vietnamese, with Spanish being much more prevalent across the region. For the Spanish language, NCTCOG takes a region-wide approach to reach the most people, while for languages like Vietnamese, a more localized, neighborhood-level outreach strategy is employed. Examples of multilingual efforts specific to Mobility 2050 include web pages, surveys available in English and Spanish, the "Map Your Experience" tool, and graphics produced in Spanish and other languages as needed. Finally, Amy mentioned the [Mobility 2050 Outreach Toolkit](#), available on the NCTCOG website, which includes template articles, links to relevant pages, timelines, graphics for social media templates, and social media messages. Public input is ongoing throughout the year, and by the end of the year, all feedback will be compiled to produce a draft plan based on the input received.

9. **2025 – 2028 Transportation Improvement Program Draft Listings**: Christie Gotti briefed the Council on the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) development process. Christie talked about the cooperative effort required between the North Central Texas Council of Governments, local governments, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Transit agencies, and transportation agencies to develop the TIP. She provided

an overview of the TIP development process. Two focus areas were highlighted, the first was ensuring that updates to projects provided by agencies and from recent/pending TIP modifications were incorporated, and financially constraining the TIP to the 2025 Unified Transportation Program (UTP) draft allocations plus anticipated carryover funding. The second focus area covered is timely implementation of projects, which includes closely reviewing projects on the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Milestone Policy List (and those at risk of getting on the list in the future), projects with Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) and/or Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds (to avoid accumulation of carryover balances), and projects with Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TASA) funds (to avoid funding lapses). Christie briefed the Council on the Justice 40 Initiative, part of Executive Order 14008 signed in 2021, that reiterates a call for environmental justice, particularly related to climate change. Justice40 calls for 40 percent of the benefits of certain federal investments to flow to disadvantaged communities. It was noted that the RTC has funding authority over three categories that fall under Justice40: Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside, and Carbon Reduction Program. Christie reported that the Dallas-Fort Worth region exceeds the target in each category when looking at the proportion of funding that impacts low income and minority areas in the region. The TIP scope of programming was covered. The 2025-2028 TIP (Roadway and Transit) contains approximately \$10 billion dollars of projects. There are over 1,100 active projects being tracked, with 679 active projects in 2025-2045, and 74 agencies implementing those projects. She highlighted the project progress since the 2023–2026 TIP development: 163 have let (\$4.31 billion) and of those, 94 were local lets (\$0.66 billion) and 68 were state lets (\$3.65 billion). She also highlighted the projects that have been completed since the development of the 2023-2026 TIP: 143 have been completed (\$2.40 billion) and of those, 103 were locally implemented projects (\$0.54 billion) and 40 were state implemented projects (\$1.86 billion). Christie strongly encouraged everyone to review the listings to ensure projects were listed correctly, as one of the most important things for project tracking is to make sure projects are ready and in the right year. It was emphasized that if a project does not have funding in FY2025, FY2026, FY2027, or FY2028, it will not be in the new TIP. She also mentioned if the project is in FY2024, projects will not automatically carry over and projects in FY2029 and later, will be in the environmental clearance appendix of the TIP (Appendix D). Appendix D is where projects planned or funded in later fiscal years are listed, so that they can continue to move through the project development process. The TIP development schedule was covered, with June 11, 2024, being flagged as the deadline for providing comments on draft listings to ensure they could be incorporated prior to the RTC action; then submit the final document on July 1, 2024, to the state; with anticipation of the Commission’s approval in the August or September time frame; and then our federal partners tend to take about 60 to 90 days to complete their review process with expectancy of approval in October or November. Electronic Item 9 contained an overview of the TIP development process, focus areas, and schedule, and the financially constrained draft project listings for the 2025-2028 TIP are available at the following weblink: <https://www.nctcog.org/trans/funds/tip/transportation-improvement-program-docs/2025-2028tip>.

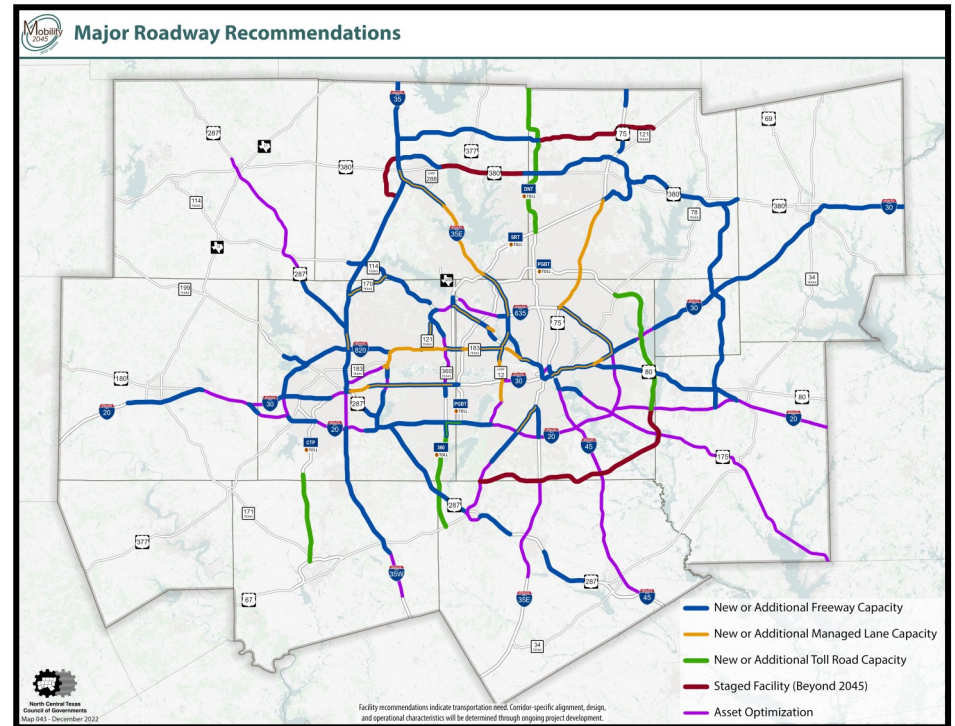
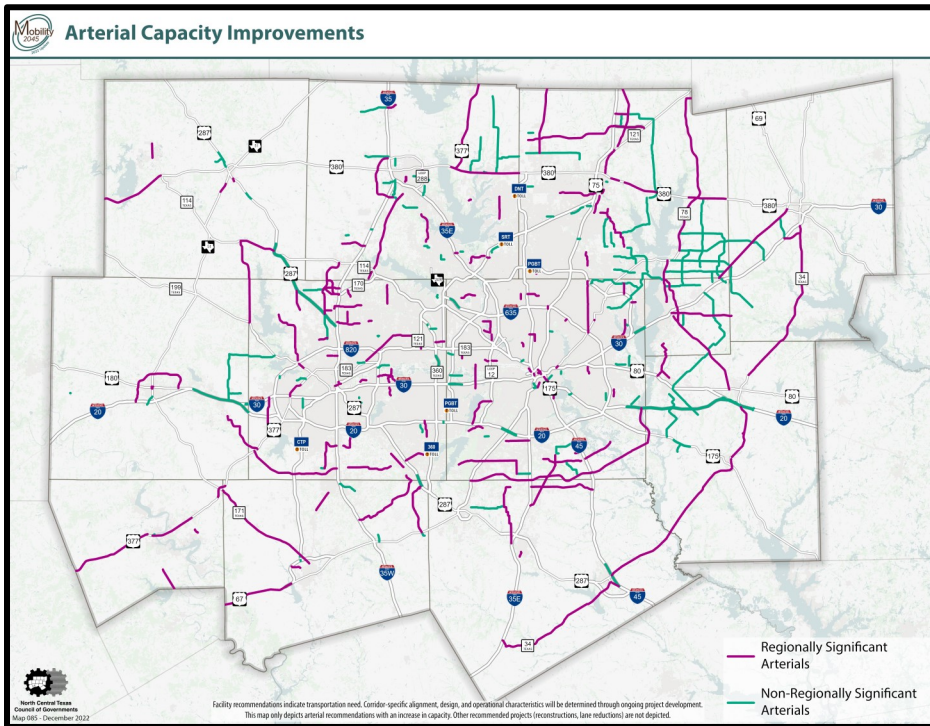
10. **Air Quality Status Report:** Due to the potential impact of severe weather and to ensure safety for members and staff, this agenda item was not presented.
11. **Air Quality and Safety Demonstration Projects:** Due to the potential impact of severe weather and to ensure safety for members and staff, this agenda item was not presented.

12. **Progress Reports:** Regional Transportation Council attendance was provided in Electronic Item 12.1 and Surface Transportation Technical Committee attendance and minutes were provided in Electronic Item 12.2.
13. **Other Business (Old or New):** There was no discussion on this item.
14. **Future Agenda Items:** There was no discussion on this item.
15. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Regional Transportation Council is scheduled for Thursday, June 13, 2024, 1:00 pm, at the North Central Texas Council of Governments.

The meeting adjourned at 2:22 pm.

Proposed Amendments to Mobility 2045: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan for North Central Texas - 2022 Update

Non-Regionally Significant Projects

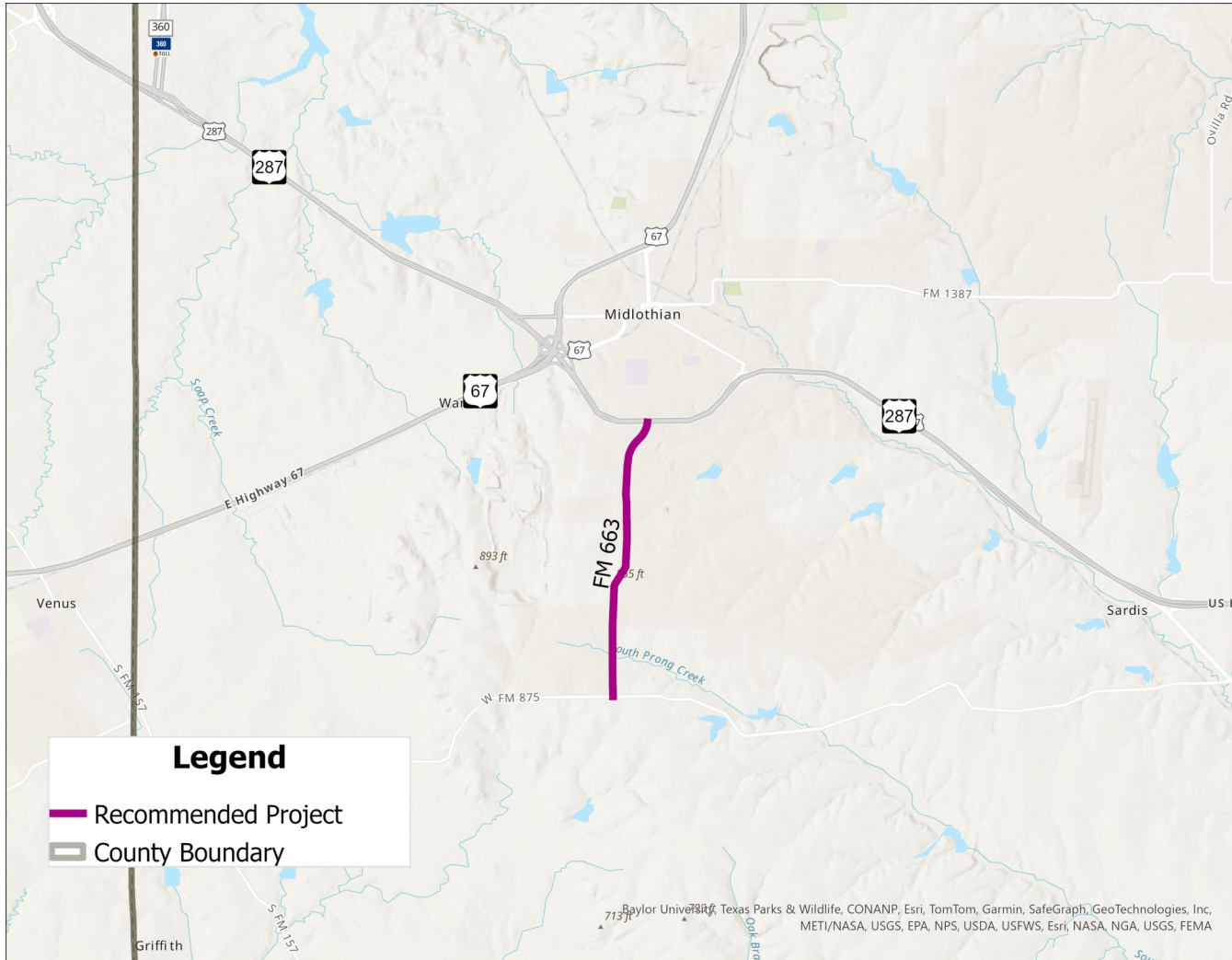


Mobility 2045 - 2022 Update, the region's long-range transportation plan, includes system-level planning and recommendations for the region's roadway network. The Arterial Capacity Improvements (left) and Major Roadway Recommendations (right) presented in the maps above illustrate the system of recommendations included. The Mobility Plan also includes recommendations in the form of policies and programs designed to advance the goals of the Regional Transportation Council resulting in individual projects such as non-regionally significant projects (an air quality designation denoting minimal significance in affecting our region's air quality). Specifically, the Mobility 2045 Update includes recommendations to advance non-regionally significant arterial improvements throughout the region in policy FT3-004 and program NRSA2-001. Please refer to [Chapter 6: Mobility Options](#) for further information on [Mobility 2045 - 2022 Update recommendations](#). The following non-regionally significant arterials are consistent with the system-level recommendations of the Mobility 2045 Update.

Mobility 2045 - 2022 Update Amendment

FM 663

Non-Regionally Significant Project



Reason for Addition: Requested by TxDOT Dallas to advance planning and design activities.

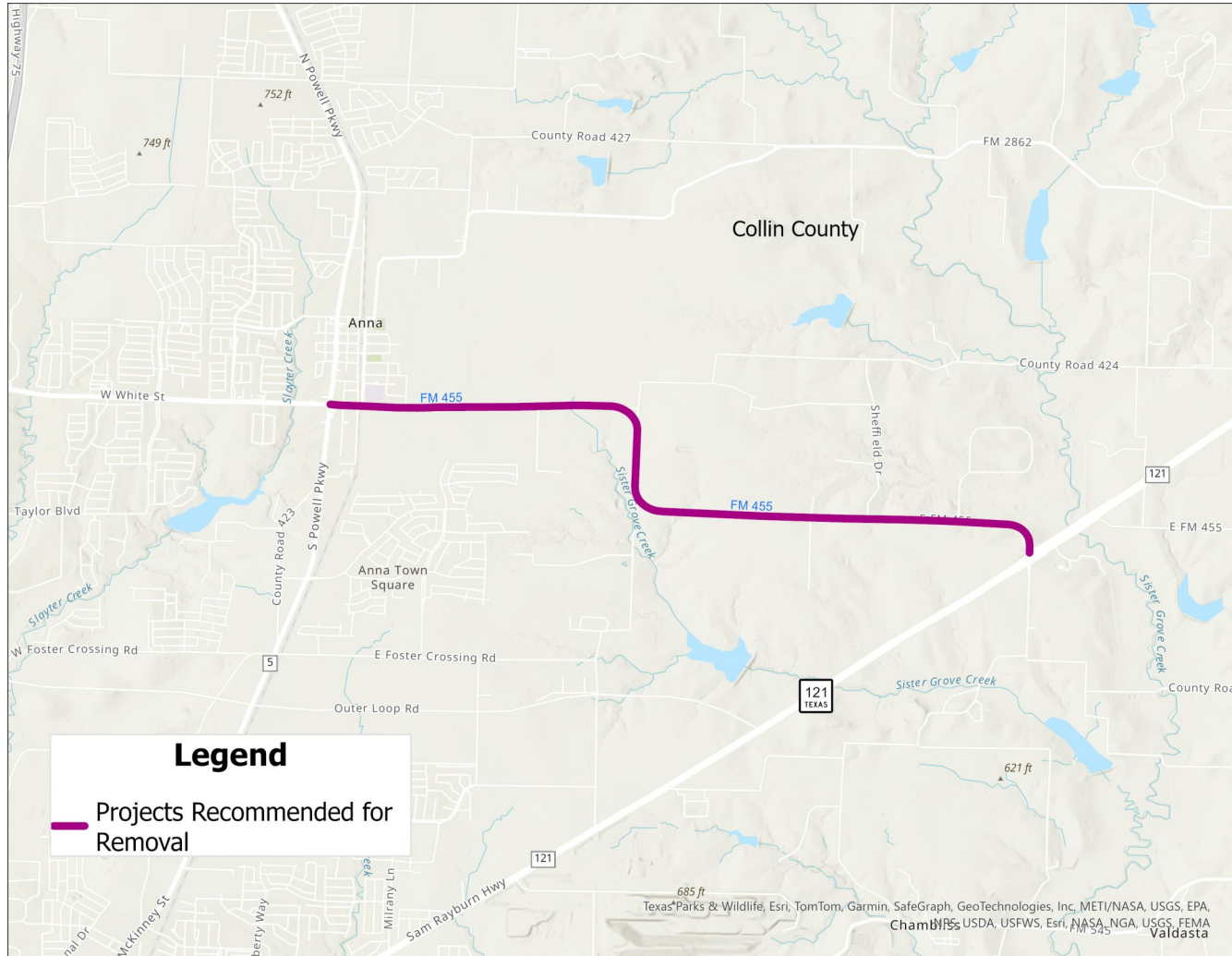
Addition of this project to the Plan does not impact air quality conformity and is financially constrained.

MTP ID	District	CSJ	Facility	From	To	Description	Total Project Cost	FFCS Status
NRSA1-DAL-359	TxDOT Dallas	0815-08-040	FM 663	US 287	FM 875	Reconstruct and widen from 2 lanes to 6 lanes	\$100,000,000	Minor Arterial

Mobility 2045 - 2022 Update Amendment

FM 455 - Request for Removal

Non-Regionally Significant Project



Reason for Removal: Requested by TxDOT Dallas for the Plan to remain financially constrained.

Removal of these projects from the Non-Regionally Significant Arterial project listing does not preclude them from being re-added at a later date.

MTP ID	District	CSJ	Facility	From	To	Description	Total Project Cost	FFCS Status
NRSA1-DAL-51	TxDOT Dallas	N/A	FM 455	Wildwood Trail	SH 121	Widen facility to 4 lane urban divided (Ultimate 6 lane divided)	\$32,785,494	Major Collector
NRSA1-DAL-306	TxDOT Dallas	N/A	FM 455	SH 5	East of Wildwood Trail	Widen 2 to 4 lane divided	\$18,758,139	Major Collector

On Fri, May 17, 2024, at 9:08 AM Ezra Silk <ezra.silk@gmail.com> wrote:
Thanks to all of our incredible speakers and sponsors, our host Sidley Austin, and all who attended [HSR2024](#).

See below for some key quotes and full recordings of both days.

NEWS RELEASE: Buttigieg, Pelosi, Other Leaders Headline U.S. High-Speed Rail Conference

More than 200 industry, labor, political and academic leaders converged to advance strategies and policies for building a nationwide high-speed rail network in America.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — May 17, 2024 — U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, House Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi, former White House Infrastructure Coordinator Mitch Landrieu, and other high-profile advocates for high-speed rail headlined the U.S. High Speed Rail annual conference May 14-15 in Washington, D.C. They were among more than 200 industry, labor, political and academic leaders who converged at the sold-out event to advance strategies and policies for building a nationwide high-speed rail network in America.

Conference speakers asserted that America is entering a new era of progress on high-speed rail, following unprecedented investments by the Biden Administration; Brightline West breaking ground on a bullet train from Las Vegas to Southern California last month; major new labor agreements; and federal designation of seven high-speed rail corridors around the country, from the Southeast to Texas to the Pacific Northwest.

At the conference, sessions focused on a range of plans to turn high-speed rail into a major mode of transportation in America. Panelists discussed strategies to launch new high-speed rail projects in major regions across the country, massively speed up project development and construction timelines and ensure the initial lines taking shape out West successfully demonstrate the sweeping benefits of high-speed rail.

Here's what some of the leading conference speakers said:

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg:

“I’m coming to this increasingly now as a parent. Our twins are two and a half years old. I was on drop-off duty this morning and they have begun — I have no idea why — they’ve been asking me about my work. ... I tell them I work on cars, that I work on planes and that I work on trains, and I’m working on making those trains go faster. And one of the things I really love is the thought that they’re two and a half now, and if we hit our marks, they will never know a world without high-speed rail in the United States.”

U.S. House Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi:

“One of the biggest challenges in our country, at the kitchen table, because of cost, is housing, housing, housing. All over the country. Mass transit and high-speed rail is an answer to that. ... If you’re talking clean air, this is an answer. If you’re talking about a measure of job creation, this is an answer. Any subject you can bring up from environmental protection to you name it, high-speed rail and mass transit is an answer to it.”

U.S. Sen. Alex Padilla:

“It’s not just about high-speed rail in California, or now with the Brightline project connecting the Los Angeles region to Las Vegas. ... These are really initial legs in what I think is an eventual national network.”

White House Advisor Mitch Landrieu:

“It really follows a kind of simple motto that the president has — if you invest in the American people, and you invest in building things in America, and you build it from the bottom up and make sure everybody is included, everybody does better.”

Congressman Rick Larsen:

“Thanks to the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law], we made the largest investment in passenger rail since the founding of Amtrak more than 50 years ago. A high quality, high-speed intercity passenger rail network is our goal. And you have my commitment that we will continue to work toward that vision.”

Former California Governor Jerry Brown (via video):

“In California, this is something we’ve been working on not just for years, but for decades. It’s not just the product of one politician or one party. We’ve required both Republicans and Democrats. Arnold Schwarzenegger got the ball rolling. Before that, when I was governor for the first time, I’d suggested studies to get the ball rolling with high-speed rail. And now, after my term in office and Gavin Newsom following up, we have a continuity. We have a continuing investment, expressing a strong political will. If you want to do that in other parts of America, that’s what it takes.”

Ray LaHood, former U.S. Transportation Secretary and U.S. High Speed Rail Coalition Co-Chair:

“Without the national government taking the initiative, without the national government in China, Japan, Europe — that’s why they have good trains, comfortable trains, affordable trains. Because the national government set the standard and put forth the money. ... If people say to you, ‘How do we get rail?’ You’ve got to have leadership at the top.”

Roger Millar, Washington State Transportation Secretary:

“Serious planning takes serious money...Because we’re not building an expressway in a region, we’re not building a bridge across the river. We’re building a high-speed rail corridor in two states, a province, two countries, et cetera, et cetera. There’s a lot to be done.”

Brightline CEO Mike Reininger:

“Probably one of the most important end results of this program is, it is the beginning of an industry. This is where the next one and the next one and the next one start. And so the expertise, whether it’s construction expertise or technological expertise, is really going to be put to the test in this program. It will make the second, third and fourth ones easier.”

Andy Byford, Amtrak Senior Vice President of High-Speed Rail:

“California is making great strides, and Brightline is making superb progress and people have said, ‘Well, hang on a minute, where’s Amtrak in all of this?’ ... These things start small — seeds that develop into large oaks — but we are putting together Amtrak’s national strategy as America’s railroad.”

U.S. High Speed Rail CEO Andy Kunz:

“The recent federal investments are a huge boost to American high-speed rail. But let’s not kid ourselves. We’re going to need hundreds of billions of dollars and major policy reforms to develop a high-speed rail network worthy of our great country...The U.S. High Speed Rail Association and our growing advocacy coalition are laser-focused on addressing these challenges and seizing the historic opportunities before us.”

Amit Bose, head of the Federal Railroad Administration:

“When it comes to expanding world class passenger rail, including high-speed rail in America, we’re now talking about clear progress. We’re talking about turning shovels, not just possibilities.”

Congressman Seth Moulton:

“While a lot of people will be talking about fixing roads and bridges, high-speed rail is truly about the future. It’s about the future for America, not just because it’s a better way to get around, but because of what high-speed rail does for our communities. Everyone says they want classic small-town America. They want to be able to walk to local restaurants instead of driving to a strip mall with a whole bunch of chains. Well, the reason we have strip malls and chains is because we all drive cars everywhere we go. You want walkable downtowns, you have to be able to walk. You get walkable downtowns when you have train stations.”

Congressman Jim Costa:

“Big things are hard to do. And frankly there’s no book on how you build high-speed rail in America. In California, we’re writing that book.”

“To build this network in America, we’re going to have to do what they’ve done in Europe and in Asia. We’re going to have to get a Congress in the next Congress and an administration that wants to provide a dedicated source of revenue like the Federal Highway Fund for a high-speed rail network in America. I just don’t see how you build this without having a source of revenue.”

Rod Diridon, U.S. High Speed Rail Coalition Co-Chair and Chairman Emeritus, Mineta Transportation Institute:

“America is becoming a Third World country when it comes to transportation. It’s just a sad thing because we led the world for so long.”

“The worst polluters are short-hop airlines. And that’s the transportation mode that high-speed rail replaces. ... If we’re going to save this planet for our kids, we’ve got to have high-speed rail systems replacing carbon combustion.”

Greg Regan, President, AFL-CIO Transportation Trades:

“There are multiple people that are going to need a workforce and they are going to need it soon. And they are going to need it well trained and ready to move. So this is where I would challenge a lot of these folks, a lot of employers, to look to us as a partner. And we can try to figure out a system that can create a pipeline of railroad workers of all crafts and classes that are going to be ready to take the mantle and move this industry forward.”

Meg Cederoth, Director of Planning and Sustainability, California High-Speed Rail Authority:

“We are on a path to an operating railroad. And we are very clear in anchoring ourselves in some core priorities: Making sure that we have a clear definition of what we’re building. Making sure we are transparent and accountable to the stakeholders who are invested in this system. And making sure we

set clear milestones and achieve the progress that we have articulated and bring integrity to what we're doing. This megaproject delivery is crucial to realizing a high-speed rail system in California and it's crucial to advancing the program overall."

Arthur Sohikian, Executive Director, High Desert Corridor JPA:

"A year ago, I was in the audience and I was struggling to see if there were any dotted lines on anybody's map that showed the High Desert Corridor. A year later, to see everybody's map have it? It's exciting."

For more conference information, go to <https://hsr2024.com/>. Zoom recordings of conference sessions can be accessed via these links:

Day 1a:

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/r2pVero06jSkNd8X8LMHURw_CR75zsSqaxR5uFQGP89xz01XhwbSbSpR6G9BbCt_e5-gsFhYtvGWQsir?startTime=1715691510000

Passcode: Lr?8=.Vh

Day 1b:

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/r2pVero06jSkNd8X8LMHURw_CR75zsSqaxR5uFQGP89xz01XhwbSbSpR6G9BbCt_e5-gsFhYtvGWQsir?startTime=1715698589000

Passcode: Lr?8= Vh

Day 2a:

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/NCyvyvy8SgDB0GtC5OSmKnJGKfqDBJmut0MTxuP0rc-7N_i30knWEz6kdaeNqVLs.AdmGXGAYFiJqkVCZ?startTime=1715775992000

Passcode: zm0%2zC\$

Day 2b:

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/NCyvyvy8SgDB0GtC5OSmKnJGKfqDBJmut0MTxuP0rc-7N_i30knWEz6kdaeNqVLs.AdmGXGAYFiJqkVCZ?startTime=1715790338000

Passcode: zm0%2zC\$

About USHSR

The [U.S High Speed Rail Coalition](#) mobilizes leading labor unions, companies, and public servants to advance investments and policies that are making high-speed rail a reality in America. The Coalition has aggressively advocated for funding for Brightline West, California High Speed Rail, and other key projects in recent years.

Join Us in DC in May: www.hsr2024.com

Ezra R. Silk | Political Director, [U.S. High Speed Rail Coalition](#)
+1 860 916 8964

High-speed rail crucial to keeping North Texas booming, Arlington is ready to help | Opinion

star-telegram.com/opinion/opn-columns-blogs/other-voices/article288511589.html

Jim Ross

May 16, 2024

By Jim Ross

May 16, 2024 5:28 AM

The future isn't just approaching; it's here. In 2023, the Dallas-Fort Worth area topped the nation in population growth and secured the second spot for job creation, welcoming more than 152,598 residents and adding more than 154,000 jobs, as reported by the U.S. Census and federal employment data.

This rapid expansion underscores an immediate need for innovative solutions. Situated at the heart of this growth, Arlington is ready to be a committed partner, making the high-speed rail project connecting Dallas, Arlington and Fort Worth not just an ambitious vision, but a present-day necessity.

The rapid increase in population and continued job growth in our region are a call to action. We must ensure that our infrastructure can provide safe and efficient mobility options to support our needs. The rail project is more than a transportation solution; it's a strategic response to the here and now — our current growth and the opportunities it presents.

Last year, DFW's job growth ranked second only to the New York City area, highlighting the robust economic vitality of our region. High-speed rail stands to propel this growth further by improving access between our cities within the region and creating new opportunities for growth and collaboration. With the potential connection to other high speed rail lines in Texas, creating never-before seen economic opportunities.

The rail line means direct access to a larger workforce, new businesses and additional tourists for all of North Texas. It's an investment in our economic future, starting now.

This rail project is not merely about enhancing connectivity within our state but is also a testament to our region's commitment to progress and innovation. By facilitating faster, more efficient travel, we're not only catering to our growing population and its needs but also attracting international businesses and tourists, keen to engage with a region that stands at the forefront of technological and infrastructural advancement.

Arlington's commitment to this project as a regional partner underscores our city's focus on connection and collaboration, through a significant project that further enhances DFW's appeal to overseas investors and collaborators. As we forge ahead with high-speed rail,

we're laying down the tracks for a future where Texas is not just a participant in the global market, but a leader.

I call upon our community members, policymakers and stakeholders at every level to recognize the monumental impact this project has not just on our immediate surroundings, but on our global standing. By supporting the high-speed rail project, we are making a statement to the world: Texas is ready to lead, innovate and thrive on the global stage.

The time to act is now. Let us embrace this project with the foresight and ambition it deserves, propelling Texas into a future where we are not just keeping pace but setting the pace for the world to follow.

Jim Ross is mayor of Arlington.

May 14, 2024



[add property owner name]
[add property owner address]
[add property owner address – city, state, zip]

Re: Right-of-Entry Agreement Instructions

Property ID: [add property ID]

Geo ID: [add Geo ID]

Dear Property Owner,

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) with their consultant are conducting a study on the possible environmental effects of constructing a high-speed train from downtown Fort Worth to downtown Dallas, a project length of approximately 31 miles. Please see the attached fact sheet for more information. HNTB is contacting landowners of properties adjacent to the proposed Project and those who may be affected to request permission for their employees and their contractors to enter the property to perform various types of investigations on NCTCOG's behalf.

The enclosed Right-of-Entry Agreement (Agreement) provides a detailed explanation of the types and nature of the investigations that are needed.

If you wish to grant HNTB and their contractors right-of-entry onto your property, please follow these steps to complete and return the enclosed Agreement **within fifteen days of the date of this letter**.

- Sign and date the Agreement
- Add your comments and conditions for the right-of entry at the bottom of the Agreement
- Make a copy for your records
- Mail the original to: Nicole Alldredge, 5700 Granite Pkwy Suite 550, Plano, TX 75024. A self-addressed, stamped envelope has been included for your use
- If you wish to verify HNTB or their contractors, please contact: Program Manager Brendon Wheeler, PE, CFM, NCTCOG, (682) 433-0478 or BWheeler@nctcog.org
- If you have any additional questions, please contact: Ian Bryant, AICP, Senior Project Manager, HNTB, (469) 879-9670 or ibryant@hntb.com

Please note that you are not required to grant NCTCOG right-of-entry at this time; however, we appreciate your consideration of this request.

Regards,

Ian Bryant, AICP
Senior Project Manager, HNTB
lbryant@hntb.com



RIGHT OF ENTRY AGREEMENT

Project Name: DFW High-Speed Rail Service

Project Limits: Downtown Fort Worth to Downtown Dallas

Counties: Tarrant and Dallas

Parcel ID: [add parcel ID info]

Property Legal Description: [add legal description]

The undersigned property owner or their authorized designee (the Grantor) grants the North Central Texas Council of Governments' (NCTCOG) contractors (specifically HNTB, ERG, VRX, Cross Spectrum) right-of-entry (ROE) for the real property (the Property) shown on the attached map (Attachment A) for the purposes of conducting environmental investigations for the DFW High-Speed Rail Service Project. This document will be referred to as the Agreement.

NCTCOG has proposed to construct high-speed rail service between Downtown Fort Worth and Downtown Dallas within Tarrant and Dallas Counties. HNTB is the project consultant, working on behalf of NCTCOG. The Property is located within an area that may be affected by the Project.

NCTCOG and HNTB on behalf of NCTCOG are required by state and federal environmental laws to determine whether there are specific environmental resources located in the vicinity of the Project and evaluate the potential to impact resources located in the Corridor as shown on the attached project fact sheet. HNTB or its contractors may be performing investigations for the Project and may be identifying environmental resources along the corridor, including but not limited to: wetlands and streams, cultural resources (historical and archeological), regulated materials, threatened and endangered species, and sensitive habitats or areas. HNTB contractors include Environmental Research Group (ERG), Cross Spectrum Acoustics (CSA), and VRX, Inc.

Work needed to complete environmental investigations for the Project will be conducted by HNTB contractors on behalf of NCTCOG. The investigations may include surveys to identify archeological sites and, if sites are present, further evaluation of those sites to determine eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and designations as a State Antiquities Landmark may be required. In some cases, the investigations may also involve limited hand excavation (such as shovel-dug probes). Any needed excavation will be backfilled, and the surface will be returned as close as possible to its original state.



RIGHT OF ENTRY AGREEMENT

In addition, HNTB or its contractors may need to investigate habitats or locations that may be home to threatened or endangered species as well as wetlands or streams. Land surveying in the project vicinity, along the right-of-way, may also need to be performed. Field investigations would likely take place on foot.

The Grantor understands and agrees to the following terms and conditions:

- After granting the requested right-of-entry, the Owner, or the owner's authorized agent with signatory responsibility, reserves all rights, titles and interest in and to the property.
- The right-of-entry shall not prejudice the Owner's rights to any relocation benefits for which the Owner(s) would otherwise be eligible.
- The Owner(s) or the owner's authorized agent with signatory responsibility, grants HNTB or its contractors access to perform the investigation work at its own risk and expense. Temporary flagging or temporary markers may be used to locate specific features or survey points on the property.
- HNTB or its contractors are authorized to cross other portions of the Property to gain access to the Corridor for purposes of the investigative work.
- To the extent possible, HNTB and its contractors will walk the Corridor and observe all of the information needed for the investigation, without using excavations, and will leave the Property in substantially the same condition as it was prior to the investigation.
- The Agreement shall be effective the date it is executed and shall remain in effect until December 31, 2024.
- The Grantor may be present during the investigation. Please indicate the preferred method for notification at the bottom of the form.
- The Grantor will contact any tenants or lessees on the Property or will provide the names and contact numbers to HNTB prior to HNTB or its contractors entering the Property.
- The right-of-entry, unless revoked or terminated, shall extend to and bind the signatory parties, their heirs, executors, administrators, legal representatives, successors, and assigns, including the contractors, consultants, agents and all other HNTB has deemed necessary to share in this right-of-entry.
- If the Owner is not the original individual, by signature, the undersigned authorized representative of the Owner with signatory authority warrants and represents that he or she is duly authorized and empowered to enter into and to execute the right-of-entry on behalf of the Owner.
- If the property is owned by multiple Owners, all legal Owners must sign this right-of-entry form for it to be effective.
- Any artifacts found during the investigation will be documented in the field and then returned to the place where they were found.



RIGHT OF ENTRY AGREEMENT

If you have any questions about the investigations or surveys that may be conducted, or if you have information about the Property you wish to share, please contact:

Ian Bryant, AICP, Project Manager, HNTB

Email Address: ibryant@hntb.com

Telephone Number: (469) 879-9670

Note that information, conditions, or comments concerning the Property may be described below.

This agreement applies to the Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Rail Project and Parcel ID [insert parcel ID], and shall be effective as of the date of signature(s) below:

SIGNATURE OF PROPERTY OWNER/AUTHORIZED AGENT

SIGNATURE OF PROPERTY OWNER/AUTHORIZED AGENT

PRINTED NAME OF PROPERTY OWNER/AUTHORIZED AGENT

PRINTED NAME OF PROPERTY OWNER/AUTHORIZED AGENT

DATE

DATE

CONTACT INFORMATION
Telephone Number: _____
Email Address: _____
Mailing Address: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION
Telephone Number: _____
Email Address: _____
Mailing Address: _____



RIGHT OF ENTRY AGREEMENT

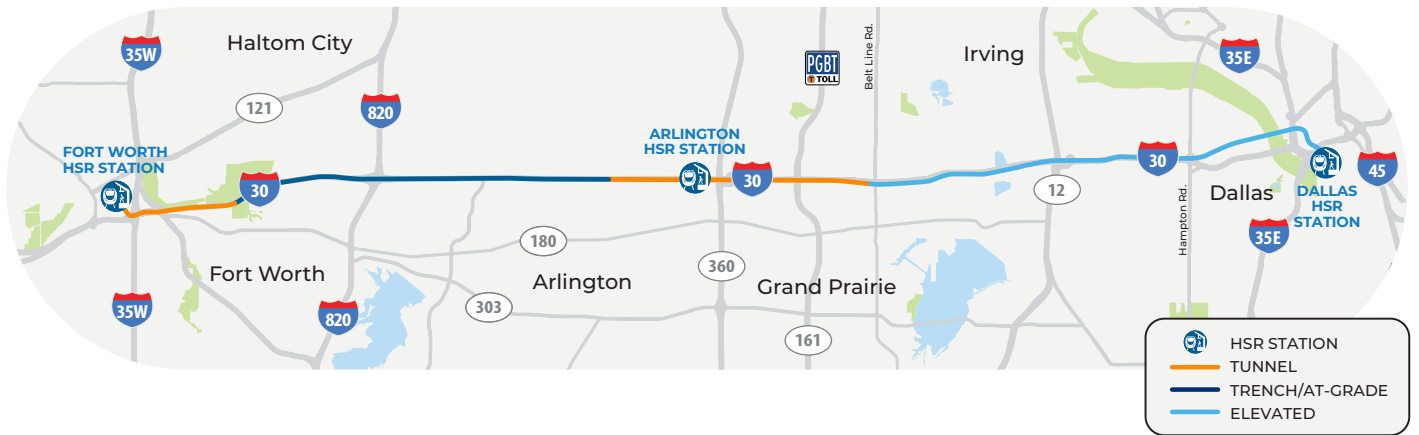
Comment/Conditions for right-of-entry or denial of right-of-entry

(Include contact information for advanced notification)

DALLAS-FORT WORTH HIGH-SPEED RAIL SERVICE PROJECT



The North Central Texas Council of Governments and their consultant are conducting a study on the possible environmental effects of constructing a high-speed train from downtown Fort Worth to downtown Dallas.



BENEFITS OF HIGH-SPEED RAIL



During this environmental study, team members will review and analyze potential impacts to nature, including water and wetlands and local species and ecological systems. The team will also study community impacts, including air quality, noise and vibration and visual impacts, among others. This study began in March 2024 and will be complete by March 2025.

There is no timeline for funding or construction of this project at this time.

For additional information on this project, visit our website: www.nctcog.org/dfw-hstcs

You can also leave comments or questions here and a project team member will respond.



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

Regional Transit 2.0: Policy Oversight ("Project Review Committee")

Task	Lead Local Entity	Oversight Members (RTC Members)		Lead NCTCOG Staff	Transit Authority Lead	Lead Consultant
		Primary	Secondary			
1 – Project Management	RTC Staff	N/A	N/A	Michael Morris April Leger	DART-Dee Leggett DCTA-Paul Cristina Trinity Metro-Chad Edwards	InfraStrategies McKinsey
2 – Develop Transit Legislative Program	RTC	RTC Committee of the Whole	-	Amanda Wilson Rebekah Gongora	DART-Dee Leggett DCTA-Paul Cristina Trinity Metro-Chad Edwards	InfraStrategies
3 – Develop Strategies to Increase Transit Authority Membership	Transportation Authorities	DART, DCTA, Trinity Metro Representatives	Cities/Counties	Karla Windsor	DART-Dee Leggett DCTA-Paul Cristina Trinity Metro-Chad Edwards	InfraStrategies
4 – Develop Collaborations Between Existing Transit Authorities	Transportation Authorities	DART, DCTA, Trinity Metro Representatives	RTC Committee of the Whole	Karla Windsor	DART-Dee Leggett DCTA-Paul Cristina Trinity Metro-Chad Edwards	InfraStrategies
5 – Develop Strategies for Authority Board Partnerships & Teamwork	Transportation Authorities Member Cities	DART, DCTA, Trinity Metro Representatives	DART, DCTA, Trinity Metro Member Cities	Michael Morris	DART-Dee Leggett DCTA-Paul Cristina Trinity Metro-Chad Edwards	McKinsey

Regional Transit 2.0: Policy Oversight ("Project Review Committee") continued

Task	Lead Local Entity	Oversight Members (RTC Members)		Lead NCTCOG Staff	Transit Authority Lead	Lead Consultant
		Primary	Secondary			
6 – Develop Strategies for In-Fill Development	Member Cities	DART, DCTA, Trinity Metro Member Cities	DART, DCTA, Trinity Metro Representatives	Karla Windsor	DART-Dee Leggett DCTA-Paul Cristina Trinity Metro-Chad Edwards	InfraStrategies
7 – Review of Fare Collection Strategies	Transportation Authorities	DART, DCTA, Trinity Metro Representatives	Cities/Counties	Amanda Wilson Rebekah Gongora	DART-Dee Leggett DCTA-Paul Cristina Trinity Metro-Chad Edwards	InfraStrategies
8 – Develop Recommendations for Transit Authority/Member City Paradox	Transportation Authorities Member Cities	DART, DCTA, Trinity Metro Representatives	DART, DCTA, Trinity Metro Member Cities	Michael Morris	DART-Dee Leggett DCTA-Paul Cristina Trinity Metro-Chad Edwards	McKinsey
9 – Final Report	RTC Staff	RTC Committee of the Whole	-	All NCTCOG Staff	DART-Dee Leggett DCTA-Paul Cristina Trinity Metro-Chad Edwards	InfraStrategies McKinsey

FY2024-2025 Regional Tire Collection Event

Call for Sponsorship

The NCTCOG Environment and Development department has allocated funding for sponsoring tire collection events across the North Central Texas region. Cities and counties can either host an event for residents or collect tires from an illegal dump site on public property. All events and cleanup activities must be complete by October 31, 2024. This opportunity will operate on a first-come, first-serve basis.

If you are interested in hosting a tire collection event or performing a tire clean up on public property, please review the below requirements and email your completed application to Alexa Gilbert at agilbert@nctcog.org by close of business, **Wednesday, July 3, 2024**.



This program is funded through a solid waste management grant provided by TCEQ.

NCTCOG Staff Contact:
Alexa Gilbert
Environment and Development Planner
North Central Texas Council of Governments
agilbert@nctcog.org
817-608-2334

FY2024-2025 Regional Tire Collection Events

Requirements:

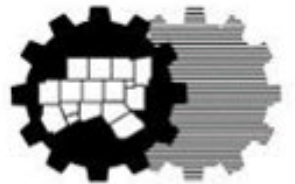
- The participating entity must be eligible to receive solid waste funding from NCTCOG (must be within NCTCOG's 16-county region, a city, county, or special law district.)
- The participating entity must provide NCTCOG with an estimated cost of the tire collection event in the original request for sponsorship. If selected for sponsorship, NCTCOG will enter into an Interlocal Agreement with the entity to provide us with the ability to sponsor your event.
- The participating entity must be able to procure their own tire collection vendor.
- The participating entity must provide background documentation of the procurement process for NCTCOG's review.
- The participating entity must be able to properly advertise their event to residents.
- The participating entity and/or tire collection vendor must provide the manifests from the event that include the number of tires collected to NCTCOG at the conclusion of the event.
- The participating entity must pay for the tire collection vendor up front and be reimbursed by NCTCOG.
- The participating entity must provide proper backup documentation of the payment to be reimbursed for the event, as per the standard [Request for Reimbursement guidelines](#) for the FY2024-2025 solid waste pass-through grants.
- All above items must take place by October 31, 2024, to ensure NCTCOG has the ability to reimburse the event.



High-Occupancy Vehicle Quarterly Report

Regional Transportation Council
Meeting


June 13, 2024



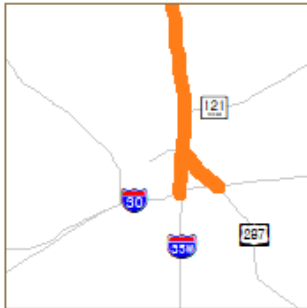
North Central Texas
Council of Governments

Managed Lane System

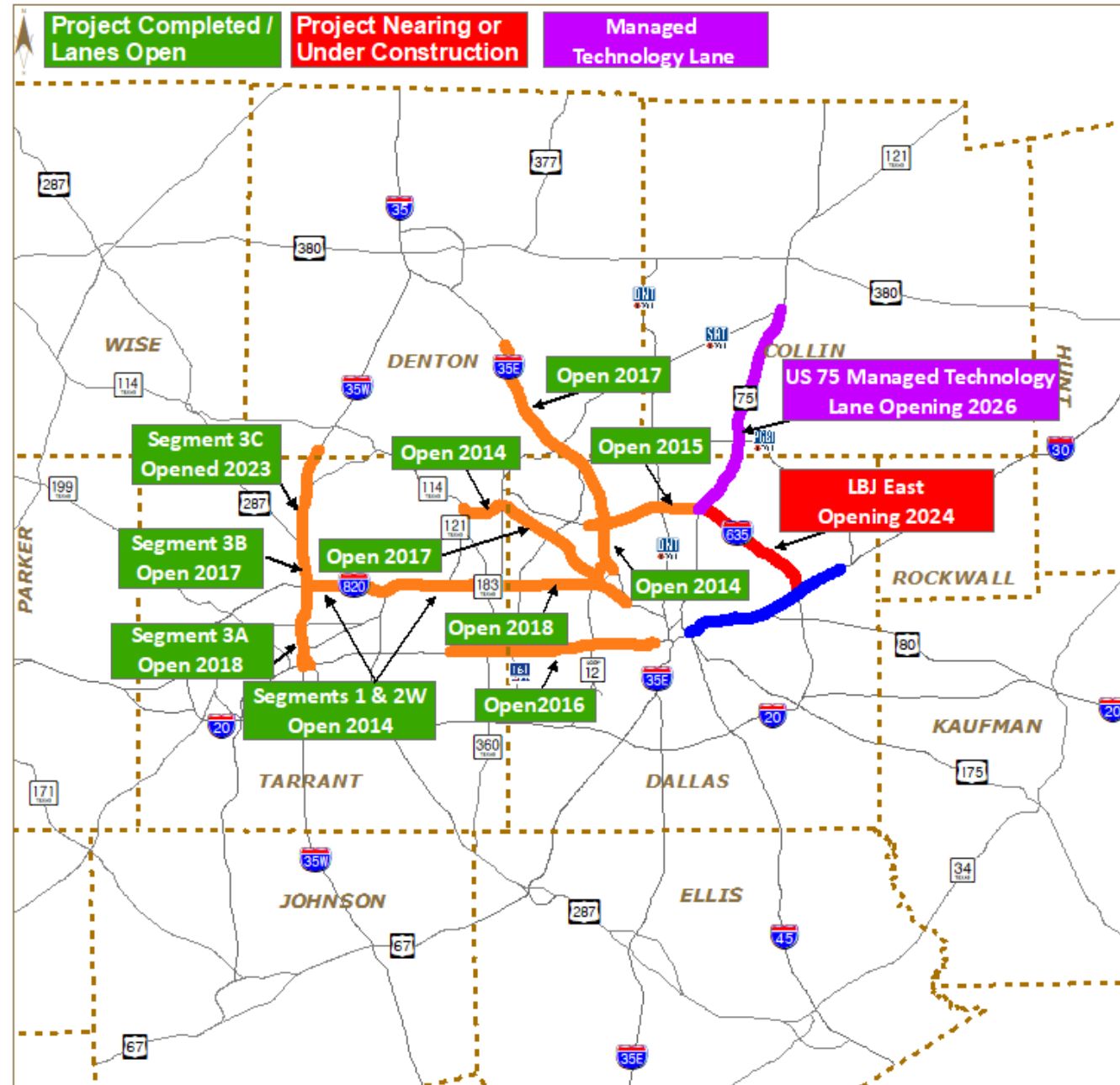
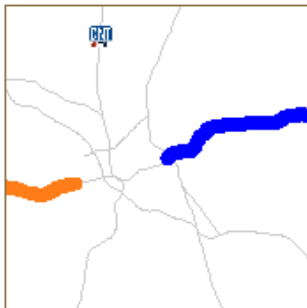
Current Express/HOV + New Managed Lanes

-  Current Express/HOV Lanes
-  Current TEXpress Managed Lanes
-  TEXpress Managed Lanes Under Construction
-  Managed Technology Lane
-  Major Roadways

Fort Worth CBD



Dallas CBD



Toll Managed Lane Data Monitoring

Cumulative December 2013 – March 2024

How much HOV 2+ Subsidy has the RTC been responsible for?

\$9,822,673 as of November 2023

How much of the Vanpool Toll reimbursement has the RTC been responsible for?

\$12,407 from October 2014 – March 2024

How long can the RTC keep the HOV policy at 2+?

For now, it remains 2+ and it will continue to be monitored quarterly

Have there been any additional NTTA customer service needs?

No, minimal impact

Have the speeds on the Toll Managed Lane facilities dropped below 35 mph?

No

Toll Managed Lane Data Monitoring

Cumulative December 2013 – March 2024

Facility	HOV 2+ Subsidy Costs	NTTA Customer Service (Additional Needs)	Project Performance Events (Speeds < 35 mph)
North Tarrant Express <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SH 183/121 from IH 35W to SH 121 • IH 35W from IH 30 to US 287 	\$5,799,128	Negligible	0
LBJ Express <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IH 635 from Preston Road to Greenville Avenue • IH 35E from Loop 12 to IH 635 	\$4,023,545	Negligible	0
DFW Connector SH 114 from Kimball Avenue to Freeport Parkway	N/A	Negligible	0
IH 30 Managed Lanes IH 30 from SH 161 to Westmoreland Road	N/A	Negligible	0
IH 35E Managed Lanes IH 35E from FM 2181 (Teasley) to LBJ	N/A	Negligible	0



Update

Automated Vehicle Occupancy Verification

Through May 31, 2024



HOV Users

January 24, 2020 – May 31, 2024

Users: 74,154

Vehicles: 72,440

Occupant Passes: 13,248



Total and HOV Transactions

January 24, 2020 – May 31, 2024

Total Transactions – 5,370,801

LBJ/NTE Partners – 3,542,702

TxDOT – 1,828,098

Total HOV Transactions – 2,546,645 (~47%)

LBJ/NTE Partners – 1,731,849

TxDOT – 814,796

Unique Vehicles – 63,206



Questions/Contacts

Natalie Bettger

Senior Program Manager

nbettger@nctcog.org

817-695-9280

Dan Lamers

Senior Program Manager

dlamers@nctcog.org

817-695-9263

Amanda Wilson

Program Manager

awilson@nctcog.org

817-695-9284

Berrien Barks

Program Manager

bbarks@nctcog.org

817-695-9282



Air Quality Project Spotlight: Hydrogen Planning Project

Regional Transportation Council

June 13, 2024

North Central Texas Council of Governments

Houston to Los Angeles IH 10 Corridor Project

GTI Energy-led project awarded by the Department of Energy (DOE)

Project Objectives

- Build computer models for vehicle, fueling infrastructure, and operational data
- Develop a replicable blueprint for other corridors and megaregions
- Establish a heavy-duty hydrogen refueling and freight truck network in the Texas Triangle and IH 10 corridor from Houston to Los Angeles

NCTCOG Role as Project Partner

- Supply GTI Energy with travel demand and property location data
- Create a Local Project Advisory Group with urban/rural meetings at least quarterly
- Share advisory group findings with identified minority serving institutions and publicly



Project Advisory Groups

Community engagement providing feedback on hydrogen infrastructure planning around the Texas Triangle

First Urban Local Project Advisory Group was held on Tuesday, April 9, 2024; next meeting in July

First Rural Local Project Advisory Group was held on Wednesday, June 5, 2024

Local governments or other community organizations interested in joining, contact cleancities@nctcog.org

Contact Us



Lori Clark
Senior Program Manager
& DFWCC Director
lclark@nctcog.org



Jared Wright
Senior Air Quality Planner
jwright@nctcog.org



Maggie Quinn
Air Quality Planner
mquinn@nctcog.org



**Dallas-Fort Worth
CLEAN CITIES**



dfwcleancities.org



cleancities@nctcog.org

PUBLIC COMMENTS REPORT

WRITTEN COMMENTS SUBMITTED BY WEBSITE, EMAIL & SOCIAL MEDIA

Purpose

The public comments report is 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 (MPO) and amended on Nov. 10, 2022.

This document is a compilation of general public comments submitted from Saturday, April 20 through Sunday, May 19, 2024 via website, email, social media and in person at NCTCOG's monthly Regional Transportation Council (RTC) meeting. This month, comments related to walking, biking, sustainable development and roadways were in the majority.

Additionally, comments can be submitted through Map Your Experience, the Transportation Department's online mapping tool. This tool allows users to drop a pin on a location in the region and leave a detailed comment. The tool received four new comments related to bicycle and pedestrian, roadway, and transit conditions. You can view these new comments as well as past comments by visiting <http://nctcoggis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/CrowdsourcingReporter/index.html?appid=b014e6d39b604b3ca329d9094ed1e9e2>.

Air Quality

Twitter –

1. In preparation for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, which will be partially hosted in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, @NCTCOGtrans has applied for \$55 million in federal grant funding for the acquisition of 59 electric buses. — The Texan (@TheTexanNews)



Facebook –

1. The way you drive plays a big role in fuel consumption! Speeding, reckless and aggressive driving increases fuel use, costs more for the driver & contributes to poor air quality. #CarCareMonth #NTXCarCare #CarMaintenance #WednesdayWisdom — NCTCOG Transportation Department



Ya think? 🤔🤔🤔 — Wm Atkins

2. Did you know? Checking the Air Quality Index on AirNorthTexas.org and limiting time outside when air quality is poor can help protect you from asthma triggers like wildfires and smoke. #AsthamaAwarenessMonth #AQAW2024 — NCTCOG Transportation Department



Wow. — Rob Dentremont

3. This light indicates a potentially serious problem with your vehicle. It also means your emissions are higher than normal. Help keep our air clean, address the light as soon as possible! Learn more at ntxcarcare.org #CarCareAwareness #CarCareTips #TipTuesday —

NCTCOG Transportation Department



My check engine light was on. Then I travelled for 6 weeks so disconnected the batter. Upon reconnect, no light, and passed inspection a month later: — Rob Dentremont

Bicycle/Pedestrian/Sustainable Development

Instagram –

1. Learn your rights and responsibilities when walking, biking or driving. Together, we can make our streets safer for everyone! — NCTCOG Transportation (@nctcogtrans)



Laura, consider yourself an opp — Jasper Snowberger (@jasper_snowberger)

I personally get 50 points each day — Rylan Luttmer (@lightning_446)

2. Why Bike & Roll to School? Because it builds community and empowers students of all abilities to enjoy physical activity, and foster social connections. Join us on May 8. For details, see the link in our bio! #BikeRollToSchoolDay #SafeRoutestoSchool #SafeRoutes

#ActiveTravel #NationalBikeMonth — NCTCOG Transportation (@nctcogtrans)



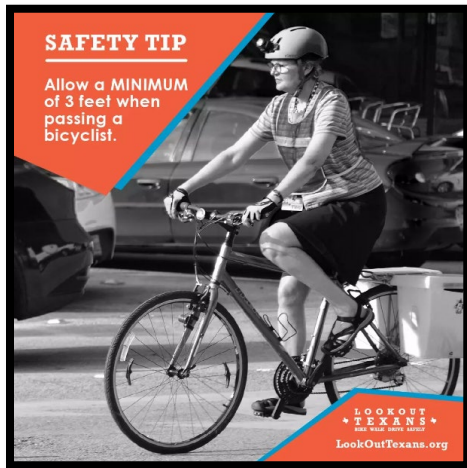
Hey @rosemondadsclub, are y'all doing bike bus to school on this day?? 😊 Cc: @dallasbicyclecoalition — Hexel Colorado (@hexel.co)

3. Thank you to everyone who came out to our Spring General Meeting! And thank you @fcbrewing for generously sharing your space. Check out some of the pictures and slides above. We got to hear from @nctcogtrans about the DFW Discovery Trail, set have all but a couple miles complete by 2025. @dartdaily shared an update on the Silver Line and accompanying Cotton Belt trail. The train is set to run by late 2025 and Phase 2 construction of the trail should begin by spring 2025. Lastly @dalldot shared about bike facility best practices from Portland, Oregon, one of the best biking cities in the country. Some of the reasons that Portland is so successful are because they prioritize pedestrians and cyclists above all else, include world class Dutch standards for bike and road design, and limit traffic speed and volume where cars and bikes mix. We also learned about bike boulevards that are part of the Dallas Bike Plan and a new facility type that advocates like us can help be successful here in Dallas. Links to more information and the full slide deck are in our stories today and saved in our events story highlight. — Dallas Bicycle Coalition (@dallasbicyclecoalition)



4. Look Out Texans is a program of @nctcogtrans, designed to help spread awareness of safe driving practices and keep Texans alert. Be aware of other vehicles and predict movements of drivers and pedestrians. Anticipate turning movements and opening car doors to avoid

collisions. Bike, walk, drive safely. go.ridetm.org/lookout — Trinity Metro (@ridetrinitymetro)



5. Today is Bike & Roll to School Day! This annual celebration highlights the benefits of walking and bicycling, as well as the importance of traffic safety. Find more information about the event by checking out the link in our bio! 🚲 🚶 🗺️ #BikeRollToSchoolDay #BikeToSchool — NCTCOG Transportation (@nctcogtrans)

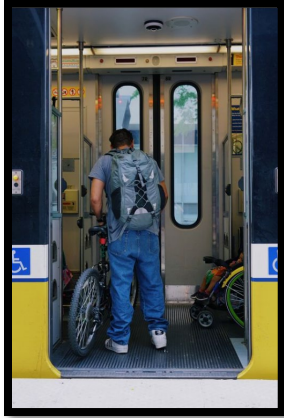


For everybody reading this post, students riding bicycles or walking to school and other places whenever possible make for terrific ways to help reduce car traffic, road congestion, and air pollution, as well as providing a great way to get in physical activity! — Paul McManus (@paul.mcmanus.10)

Facebook –

1. 🚲 💡 Did you know? You can take your bike on DART buses, trains, and the TRE. Join the 2024 DART Bike to Work Challenge for your chance to win a custom DART bikes at the annual Bike to Work Day event on May 10! All you have to do is take a picture of yourself using your bike in tandem with DART to get to work! Tag us by May 3 and use #DARTBike2Work — Dallas

Area Rapid Transit (Official DART page)



Who's up for the DART 2024 Bike to Work Challenge? — NCTCOG Transportation Department

Nice job, NCTCOG Transportation Department, just go ahead and jump on board DART's promotion. So none of you need feel guilty about never biking to work. Don't feel bad, at least one city is doing the same thing. — Rob Dentremont

2. Learn your rights and responsibilities when walking, biking or driving. Together, we can make our streets safer for everyone! — NCTCOG Transportation Department



Drivers in Amarillo will look you dead in the eyes and mash the gas — Clinton Corbin Ferguson

3. Learn your rights and responsibilities when walking, biking or driving. Together, we can make our streets safer for everyone! — NCTCOG Transportation Department



Amen — Wilfran Oliveros

4. Take Dallas Area Rapid Transit (Official DART page)'s Bike to Work Challenge and you could win a custom bike! You'll also make a positive impact on your health and the environment by combining your bicycle and DART on your commute to work. Find out more: <https://bit.ly/4dkcBlf> — NCTCOG Transportation Department



Oh wow, NCTCOG Transportation Department, so impressive of you to jump onto DART's initiative. You don't have one of your own. — Rob Dentremont

5. Did you know that biking to school helps reduce traffic and improves air quality? Join us this Wednesday and make an impact on your community! Read more about the benefits of Bike & Roll to School Day here: <https://bit.ly/4bpi2UC?> #BikeRollToSchoolDay #AQAW2024 — NCTCOG Transportation Department



Wow, you guys are impressive. Let the schoolkids bike to school but none of you bike to work – hypocrites! — Rob Dentremont

6. Today is Bike & Roll to School Day! This annual celebration highlights the benefits of walking and bicycling, as well as the importance of traffic safety. 🚲🛴👟 Find more information about the event here: <https://bit.ly/3Qh6bj3> — NCTCOG Transportation Department

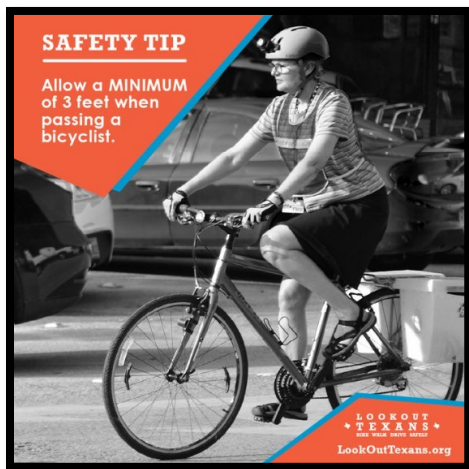


For everybody reading this post, students riding bicycles or walking to school and other places whenever possible make for terrific ways to help reduce car traffic, road congestion, and air pollution, as well as providing a great way to get in physical activity! — Paul McManus

When is bike and roll to work day for you, NCTCOG Transportation Department? So you can do something for real instead of piggybacking on backs of children. — Rob Dentremont

Twitter –

1. Look Out Texans is a program of @NCTCOGTrans, designed to help spread awareness of safe driving practices and keep Texans alert. Be aware of other vehicles and predict movements of drivers and pedestrians. Bike, walk, drive safely. <http://go.ridetm.org/lookout> — Trinity Metro (@TrinityMetro)



2. Our Viridian Elementary Bike & Roll Event was a huge success! Over 90 bikes and scooters today! @NCTCOGtrans @HEBISDpeople @BuhrowSonya @ViridianPTA — Melanie Mans,

M.Ed. (@PrincipalMans)



3. Today is Bike & Roll to School Day! This annual celebration highlights the benefits of walking and bicycling, as well as the importance of traffic safety. 🚲 🚼 🛑 Find more information about the event here: <https://bit.ly/3Qh6bj3> — NCTCOGTransportation (@NCTCOGtrans)



#BikeSafe — U in the Driver Seat (@UDriverSeat)

Mail –

1. Phyllis Silver, Citizen

Please see Attachment 1 for comments submitted via postal mail.

Please see Attachment 2 for response by NCTCOG Transportation Staff.

Innovative Technology

Facebook –

1. Get ready to witness the future in action 🤖 On May 8, Arlington will host a Multimodal Delivery Showcase, featuring autonomous ground robots and uncrewed aircraft systems, that will be used to test the delivery of food to residents through an innovative pilot project. More information about the pilot project will be shared at the public demonstration. The event is

scheduled for 5:30 to 7 p.m. outside the Bob Duncan Center. — City of Arlington, TX – City Hall



Is it true Arlington is the largest U.S. city without mass transit? — Rob Dentremont

2. Yesterday we got a glimpse of the future of delivery service at the Multimodal Showcase in City of Arlington, TX - City Hall, with demonstrations of remote piloted aircraft and ground-based bots that will deliver essential items to people in the community. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/3UxFcRW> — NCTCOG Transportation Department



Those would make a great ice cream cart in my neighborhood! — Jere Tucker

Other

Instagram –

2. @cupa_unt and @untnlisa check out the different career opportunities at @nctcogtrans @untcareercenter — UNT Public Administration (@unt.public.administration)



2. Our @unt Urban Planning and Nonprofit Leadership students are truly inspiring. We celebrate their hard work and career paths to help our communities and nonprofits. @untnlisa @cupa_unt @unthps @untcareercenter @nctcogtrans @journey_to_dream yed — UNT Public Administration (@unt.public.administration)



Mail –

1. Phyllis Silver, Citizen

Please see Attachment 3 for comments submitted via postal mail.

Event –

1. Sunny South Dallas Food Park

Please see Attachment 4 for comments submitted at a public event.

Public Involvement

Facebook –

1. Tell us how the Dallas-Fort Worth transportation system is working for you!
🚗 🚲 🚶 #ConnectNorthTexas #PlaninProgress — NCTCOG Transportation Department



Please see Attachment 5 for comments submitted via Facebook.

2. We enjoyed participating in Lewisville's 2024 ColorPalooza this past weekend! Thankful for the opportunity to meet with members of the community and share about NCTCOG's various projects, plans, and initiatives. Find out more on our website: nctcog.org/trans — NCTCOG Transportation Department



Come to Weatherford Texas (about 4:30 is a good time) and set up at the Home Depot for a discussion at 5:00 pm so we the town people can talk with you all about your initiatives for Parker County. Use the GPS way of travel. Love to see what your opinions are. And discuss the improvements you've going to do for Parker County. — Hegre Eric

2. High-Speed Rail, list of funded projects, and more for review/comment. — NCTCOG Transportation Department



Stop pushing toll roads and public transportation. — Crystal Main

Tell Jeff Williams [REDACTED] of HSR to stuff it. YOU ARE BANKRUPTING TAXPAYERS. Stop being California. — Mi Licater

Roadways

Twitter –

1. DON'T FORGET TO MARK YOUR CALENDARS! We are three weeks away from the first Come & Go Open House for Access Butler Place Plan, taking place on Thursday, May 9, 4:30 – 7:30 pm at Fort Worth Central Station. For more details, visit www.AccessButlerPlacePlan.com (link in bio) #AccessButlerPlacePlan #Accessibility #Reconnect #FortWorth #Community #Transportation #FWHS #Mobility #Infrastructure #Downtown #Neighborhoods #Engagement #GetInvolved #Planning @cityoffortworth @downtownfortworth @nctcogtrans @txdot — Access Butler Place Plan (@accessbutlerplaceplan)



2. Thanks @NCTCOGtrans, @CityOfDallas Transportation Department, and North TX Tollway Authority #NTTA for hosting USTDA's Indonesia New Capital City delegation, sharing best practices to improve mobility, provide safe and reliable transportation, and deploy next-gen

solutions. — USTDA (@USTDA)



3. Good News! We're celebrating the official opening of the Irving Interchange bridges and connections today. #DFWTraffic @CityofIrving @TxDOT #TexasClearLanes @NCTCOGtrans — TxDOT Dallas (@TxDOTDallas)



Instagram –

1. MARK YOUR CALENDARS and join us for a Come & Go Open House on Thursday, May 9, 4:30 pm - 7:30 pm at Fort Worth Central Station, 1001 Jones St., Fort Worth (2nd Floor). Can't make the meeting? We have got your back, all information presented at the open house will be on the project website, along with an online community survey starting on May 9! (link in bio) #AccessButlerPlacePlan #Accessibility #Reconnect #FortWorth #Community #Transportation #FWHS #Mobility #Infrastructure #Downtown #Neighborhoods #Engagement #GetInvolved #Planning @cityoffortworth @downtownfortworth @nctcogtrans @txdot — Access Butler Place Plan (@accessbutlerplaceplan)



2. 4.8 miles of new pavement + 4.6 miles of bridges = reduced congestion in #Irving! Work started in 2020, and today we officially opened all roads! Thank you to our partners

@nctcogtrans @CityofIrving and contractor @webberllc for joining us today! #TexasClearLanes — TxDOT Dallas (@txdotdallas)



3. SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK! Take the first Access Butler Place Plan community survey today to shape future transportation, infrastructure, and mobility priorities across the Central Area, which includes Downtown Fort Worth, Butler Place, and the United Riverside. The survey will begin on May 9 at 5:00 pm and end on May 26 at 5:00 pm. #AccessButlerPlacePlan #Accessibility #Reconnect #FortWorth #Community #Transportation #FWHS #Mobility #Infrastructure #Downtown #Neighborhoods #Engagement #GetInvolved #Planning @CityofFortWorth @DowntownFortWorth @NCTCOGTrans @TxDOT — Access Butler Place Plan (@accessbutlerplaceplan)



Facebook –

1. The Access Butler Place Plan aims to reconnect, strengthen, & build community throughout Fort Worth's Central Area by identifying mobility & land use solutions that address inaccessibility, reconnect communities, and accelerate growth. Join us in a series of engagement opportunities as we work together to identify solutions to transform the Central Area's roadway infrastructure & multi-modal networks to help people get around more easily &

shape future downtown development potential! — Trinity Metro



SMART CITY TEXAS has the solution we discovered in the past....
#NorthTexasTraction — Jim Gyurkovic

RTC/STTC/Executive Board

Twitter –

1. The Regional Transportation Council, a body of the @NCTCOGtrans, meets monthly to discuss transportation policy and initiatives to prepare North Texas for the next 50 years of growth. This council allocates hundreds of millions of dollars annually towards current and future priority infrastructure projects. I am proud to represent @TarrantCountyTX on this body. — Manny Ramirez (@MannyRamirez_TX)



For Chris Klaus, Senior Program Manager.

Attachment 1

At the April 9, 2024 Public Meeting, I had commented (by phone) that it is potentially dangerous for pedestrians to cross Preston Road at certain shopping intersections. The problem is that the traffic signals allow cars to turn at the same time that these same traffic signals allow pedestrians to cross onto the same road.

Here are some examples:

- Slightly South of Forest Lane on Preston Road going to and from Natural Grocers at 11661 Preston Road to Whole Foods Market at 11700 Forest Lane at the other side of Preston Road
- Slightly North of Forest Lane on Preston Road going to and from Tom Thumb at 11920 Preston Road to the other side of Preston Road
- on the south side of Royal Lane on Preston Road (at the intersection) going to and from Central Market at 10720 Preston Road to the other side of Preston Road. Also crossing Royal Lane at this intersection, pedestrians experience turning cars as these pedestrians are crossing the street.
- Slightly north of Royal Lane on Preston Road going to and from Tom Thumb at 5959 Royal Lane to the other side of Preston Road. (Tom Thumb employees and the sales receipt says 522 Royal Lane, however 522 is the Suite number, not the Street address)

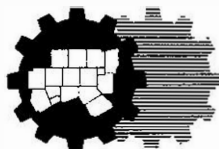
I would appreciate it if COG worked with the City of Dallas to achieve safer crossings for pedestrians. DART runs an excellent bus that travels along Preston

Road in this area. The route runs 7 days a week.
It is difficult to navigate from one side of Presta.
Road to the other. The timing of traffic signals for
pedestrians needs to be coordinated with traffic
signal timing for cars.

If you have any questions or comments, please let me
know. Jackie Castillo has my contact information.

I appreciate your interest in improving pedestrian
safety.

Phyllis Silver
4/29/2024



North Central Texas Council of Governments

May 16, 2024

Ms. Phyllis Silver
15720 Artist Way, Apt. 4912
Addison, TX 75001

Dear Ms. Silver:

Your recent letter to Chris Klaus, Senior Program Manager here at the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) on topics from the April 9, 2024, public meeting was shared with me to respond to your concerns about pedestrian safety along the Preston Road corridor in Dallas. We do appreciate your interest in the various topics presented and thank you for your feedback on these important matters.

First, we want to make you aware that NCTCOG has been working with the City of Dallas staff for several months on analysis and recommendations for the Preston Road corridor. In March, our director, Michael Morris, gave a presentation to stakeholders on safety and access improvements needed along the corridor. A copy of his presentation is included with this letter. Also, NCTCOG reached out to City of Dallas' Transportation Department and shared your letter with them. In response to your concerns, a Safety Report has been generated and staff will immediately look into the specific intersections noted in your letter. Their findings will be reported back to the department director.

NCTCOG has also produced a Pedestrian Safety Action Plan for the region. Several of the safety problems you flagged we have strategies to address. The report is also meant to act as a guide to other stakeholders in the region to implement safety strategies in their own cities. It has also been shared with the City of Dallas. It is available at www.nctcog.org/pedsafetyplan.

Again, we appreciate you bringing these matters important to our private citizens to our attention.

Please feel free to reach out to me at kwindsor@nctcog.org or 817-608-2376 if you have any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Karla Windsor, AICP
Senior Program Manager
Sustainable Development Program Area

KW:bw
Attachment

cc: Jackie Castillo, NCTCOG
Chris Klaus, NCTCOG

Question Not Pertaining to Public Meeting Topics.

Winter / Spring 2024 Mobility Matters Newsletter

on Page 3 - Region Making Progress on State Safety

Goals - under Driver Assistance - what is

MAPP services?

Phyllis Silver

4/29/2024

Road in this area. The route runs 7 days a week.
It is difficult to navigate from one side of Presta.
Road to the other. The timing of traffic signals for
pedestrians needs to be coordinated with traffic
signal timing for cars.

If you have any questions or comments, please let me
know. Jackie Castillo has my contact information.
I appreciate your interest in improving pedestrian
safety.

Phyllis Silver
4/29/2024



PUBLIC COMMENT SHEET

Name Krystal Stephens
Organization _____

Please provide written comments below:

No sidewalks on Traymore ave area
missing sections of sidewalks throughout
neighborhood. stry dogs everywhere
lack of community programming
gun shots every night.



North Central
Texas Council
of Governments

PUBLIC COMMENT SHEET

Name Theresa Turpin

Please provide written comments below:

3418 Sunnyvale Dallas, TX 75216
Old city Fair Park - no longer a non-profit

To submit comments or questions by mail, fax, or email, please send to:
North Central Texas Council of Governments, Transportation Department
P.O. Box 5888, Arlington, TX 76005-5888 Phone: (817) 695-9240 Fax: (817) 640-3028
E-mail: cbaylor@nctcog.org Website: <http://www.nctcog.org/trans>



North Central
Texas Council
of Governments

PUBLIC COMMENT SHEET

Name KARLA B-H

Organization Waco

Please provide written comments below:

~~Adding more sidewalk signals~~

~~sidewalks need to have a way to stop to~~

The ability to cross the street safely. There are sidewalks
not enough signals in order to cross over.

To submit comments or questions by mail, fax, or email, please send to:
North Central Texas Council of Governments, Transportation Department
P.O. Box 5888, Arlington, TX 76005-5888 Phone: (817) 695-9240 Fax: (817) 640-3028
E-mail: cbaylor@nctcog.org Website: <http://www.nctcog.org/trans>



North Central
Texas Council
of Governments

PUBLIC COMMENT SHEET

Name Ylonda Wright

City Dallas State TX Zip Code _____

Please provide written comments below:

- 1) Hampton Road & Pop holes
- 2) Red Bird on 18 wheelers going down street to fast

To submit comments or questions by mail, fax, or email, please send to:
North Central Texas Council of Governments, Transportation Department
P.O. Box 5888, Arlington, TX 76005-5888 Phone: (817) 695-9240 Fax: (817) 640-3028
E-mail: cbaylor@nctcog.org Website: <http://www.nctcog.org/trans>



1



NCTCOG Transportation Department

Published by Sarah Thompson · March 7 ·



Tell us how the Dallas-Fort Worth transportation system is working for you! 🚗🚲🧑

[#ConnectNorthTexas](#) [#PlaninProgress](#)



PUBLICINPUT.COM/MOBILITY2050

Take the Survey: DFW Mobility

Mobility 2050 Survey

[Learn more](#)

[See insights and ads](#)

[Boost post](#)

👍🥰 443

257 67

Like

Comment

Share

Newest



Comment as NCTCOG Transportation Department



Choteau Kammel



1

state DO is presenting their groundbreaking solutions to traffic



2d Like Reply [Send message](#) Hide



Nancy Wyrick Hamouch

Having a train stop at the AA Center has worked out so incredibly well! Now get the same for the Cowboy's and Rangers' stadiums

5w Like Reply Hide 13



Gordon Scruggs

Nancy Wyrick Hamouch Arlington does not want to participate in mass transit.

1w Like Reply Hide Edited



Mi Licater

Nancy Years ago, we took that train a few times to hockey games. Sitting in a brightly-lit car, a sitting duck after 10:00 p.m., for nearly half an hour before finally departing, was more than enough experience to prove the inconvenience and lack of personal safety of 'public transit'. No thank you.

2d Like Reply [Send message](#) Hide



Reply to Nancy Wyrick Hamouch



Billy Hall

30 or more years ago there was ZERO planning on any infrastructure in Texas and now we are paying for it in groves !!!

They can build all the roads they want but it's too late and it will always be like it is now and will get worse !!!

Texas government is the worst at all levels I'm not sure what they are doing in Austin but it's nothing to help us High Tax Payers !

9w Like Reply Hide 11



Kayla Rae Sikora

Billy Hall it's not too late. Plenty of European cities have been transformed from lots of concrete to a lot more trees, plants, and pedestrian zones. The cars can coexist, but cars don't seem to be needed.

8w Like Reply Hide 3



Brian Abraham

Kayla Rae Sikora I think the problem is that the party in charge of Texas Government places a very low priority on mass transit. They won't accept the need for it or see it as justification for the cost. Additionally war's have to be waged with land owners that have little regard for the greater good.

2w Like Reply Hide 3



Kayla Rae Sikora

Brian Abraham Texas government places a low priority on people who need mass transit, medical, education, and so much more. I stayed on a charolais farm where the TGV line was placed above grade in France. It did impact some of the cows the first year, but the people said the cows got used to it. The tgv is the high speed train. The cows had already been used to the regular trains.

1w Like Reply Hide



Brian Abraham



1



Reply to Kayla Rae Sikora



David Pass

Billy Hall That criticism seems a bit over the top. Most other states haven't done any better. In fact considering the tremendous population increase in Texas, I think we've done pretty well. If you really don't like it here, go somewhere else!

4d Like Reply [Send message](#) Hide



Reply to Billy Hall



Tracy Blankenship

Too difficult of a survey

4d Like Reply [Send message](#) Hide



Jack Bramblett

I don't live in Ft. Worth

5d Like Reply [Send message](#) Hide



Patty Bruner

Trains do bring alot of vagrants to outskirts of the city.

6d Like Reply [Send message](#) Hide



Kayla Rae Sikora

Why do other cities with metro rail have at least one officer on a train?

NYC, Manhattan, and Washington DC, (adding Philadelphia where someone punches every ticket in the train car) can manage a LEO or some security guard on their train cars.

Y'all need to make the trains work for us, and you can't just build them and then ignore the issues that may arise.

6d Like Reply [Send message](#) Hide Edited



Stephan Schnell

High-speed Trains All over the World and also Supportive to the Environment but not in this Country 🙄 Just keep on Supporting the Auto Industry. Just creating little Parks ain't cutting it smh

7w Like Reply Hide 13



Randy Fischer

Stephan Schnell you got \$2,000 for a HS rail ticket to ride to Houston? With a stop in Corsicana and Huntsville?

5w Like Reply Hide



Ken Duble

Randy Fischer It wouldn't cost that much. There would be a variety of prices, just like the airlines.

1w Like Reply Hide



Randy Fischer

Ken Duble ... 70 minutes Dallas to Houston by air nonstop
90 minutes by hsr for the same trip nonstop. Add a stop near college station - increase that 90 minutes by 30 minutes.
What business man wants to spend an extra hour each way?
Add the land acquisition and building costs to the price of those tickets.
Air routes don't have that cost.
If it was feasible, the private sector would be all over this idea.

1w Like Reply Hide





1



Ken Duble

Randy Fischer The 90 minutes of a 250 mph train ride includes a College Station stop, which I suspect would be closer to 5 minutes than 30. In the case of HSR, passengers check in early, have a boarding pass and wait in a secure area for the train to arrive.

HSR passengers check in 30 minutes early, vs an hour early for a domestic flight. Nor is there a baggage carousel, as bags are on the same car as the passenger.

Even so, your concerns underscore how, if NCTCOG's current plans of having separate rail stations 0.8 miles apart from each other (one of which would be across the freeway from downtown), erodes the greatest advantage of rail transit, which is to collect and deposit passengers in the midst of a bustling urban center.

The private sector can build rail, as seen by the success of Brightline in FL, with plans to expand to Las Vegas - LA. But rail, like MV, ship and air travel, thrive as a public-private partnership. Bear in mind airports, like seaports and rail stations, are public property.

1w Like Reply Hide



Randy Fischer

Ken Duble Touche on the 250 mph... That said, airliners run about 500 mph.

Please pardon me for being a devil's advocate...

Aren't those rail stations going to need TSA grade security?

Rail stations were built by the railroads. With few exceptions, the rails themselves are built, owned, and operated by individual railroad companies.

Bus stations were built by bus companies.

I can't speak to seaports.

Airports. Why are they special? Why can't the airlines pay for their own facilities? I mean, they make billions in profits every year according to the democrats (and many republicans).

1w Like Reply Hide



Shelley Caldwell

Randy Fischer It was the airlines' lobbying that killed bus and train everywhere except in the northeastern states.

1w Like Reply Hide



Randy Fischer

Shelley Caldwell ... So why do we build airports for the airlines to use? We didn't build bus stations and train stations.

1w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Randy Fischer



Reply to Stephan Schnell



Rob Dentremont

I am tired of surveys, but here is one for you, **NCTCOG Transportation Department**:

How many of you do not drive to the office?

Of those who drive, how many carpool?



NCTCOG Transportation Department

10w Like Reply Hide 6



1



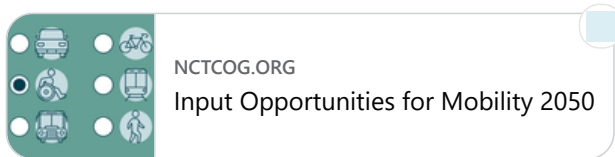
Author

NCTCOG Transportation Department

Thank you for sharing your perspectives. We have one clarification to provide: MPO staff members do not have state vehicles. We're located in the geographic center of the DFW region, allowing us to experience firsthand the transportation challenges we work to address.

We understand the frustration surrounding surveys, and we understand that they may not be the most effective or preferred method for everyone. If you're interested, there are other options for providing your perspective on cycling in the region, like monthly hybrid public meetings, using the online Map Your Experience tool to tell us specific locations of need, or even reaching out directly via email or phone. Those are linked on our website: www.nctcog.org/m50.

We've heard a lot in the last few months about bicycle and pedestrian safety and infrastructure, and planning staff are working through all the input received so far. If you have any further questions or suggestions, please feel free to reach out.



8w Like Reply Remove Preview



Cynthia Phagan Bittick

NCTCOG Transportation Department Thank you for working on the transportation challenges we all face here. I'll definitely fill out the survey!

8w Like Reply Hide



Rob Dentremont

NCTCOG Transportation Department you did not answer my questions. So I guess the answers are none and none. No leadership by example. Car alternatives are great - for masses. But not you. P.S. I only saw your reply by accident, no notification. Please tag me next time, no guarantee of a notification, but an effort.

8w Like Reply Hide



Reply to NCTCOG Transportation Department



Mi Licater

Rob Dentremont NCTCOG is an unConstitutional agency comprised of 'members' whom WE do not directly elect... and it spends millions annually without Constitutional authority.

8w Like Reply Hide

The comment Rob Dentremont is replying to has been deleted.



Rob Dentremont

Gordon Scruggs they are just happily earning a paycheck while pretending to try to make a difference.

9w Like Reply Hide

The comment Gordon Scruggs is replying to has been deleted.



Gordon Scruggs

Rob Dentremont I would recommend you do the survey with your biking friends. Although in my opinion the state seems opposed to many bicycle rules, the local government has a big say so in our area. The problem is not many people take the time to get involved and try to do anything about it. They just complain.

9w Like Reply Hide



The comment Jeff Bettger is replying to has been deleted.



1

1w Like Reply Hide

The comment Rob Dentremont is replying to has been deleted.



Rob Dentremont
Gordon Scruggs please define "improve."

9w Like Reply Hide

The comment Gordon Scruggs is replying to has been deleted.



Gordon Scruggs
Jere Tucker they are not a state agency. They are authorized understate law to act as an agency to facilitate local transportation comprised of local representatives. Your city and county governments select the representatives. This is an opportunity to give your input. 🙄

9w Like Reply Hide



The comment Gordon Scruggs is replying to has been deleted.



Gordon Scruggs
Rob Dentremont they are only trying to provide options for us to get to work. Ultimately it's our choice on what we want to do. If you don't think we should need the option to ride a bike, then comment on that. 🙄

9w Like Reply Hide



The comment Rob Dentremont is replying to has been deleted.



Rob Dentremont
Gordon Scruggs I'm only interested in surveying those in power, seeking cases of leadership by example. Not just "Gee how nice if people (not us) would bike to work."

9w Like Reply Hide



The comment Rob Dentremont is replying to has been deleted.



Rob Dentremont
Thank you for speaking up, Jere. I am connected to my local biking community, and am bothered by how much they all gush over these surveys, as if anyone gives a crap what the bikers have to say. Every single time...

10w Like Reply Hide



The comment Gordon Scruggs is replying to has been deleted.



Gordon Scruggs
Rob Dentremont in Austin in the 1980s they stopped widening roadways because it would damage Parks and neighborhoods. It was a disaster. The local transportation system has never recovered. 🙄

9w Like Reply Hide



Shelley Caldwell
Gordon Scruggs You have to go back to the late 1950s to see the beginning of the problem in Austin and Dallas -- in most Texas cities.

The transportation infrastructure in Texas was pretty good; and poised for a world-class one, since the cotton- and corn-fields, some grazing land and woods surrounded the towns and cities. We had a regional passenger train system (called the "Interurban") that fit neatly into the national ones. My parents could (and did) put me on a train in Fort Worth under the watchful eyes of the train staff, and an aunt would pick me up a few hours later in Athens, or Waco, Austin, Amarillo, or Lubbock; Roswell, or El Paso.

The airlines were growing in acceptance, but it wasn't enough for them. So they counted a massive lobbying effort to dismantle the passenger trains and force us onto planes. My parents enrolled me as an American Airlines Youth member. With my card, I could fly from Fort Worth to visit my sister in El Paso for \$12 each way, and it took an hour.

Had they known why it was so cheap and convenient, they would not have fallen for the bait-and-switch of low-cost, convenient transportation subsidized by the federal government, that soon would grow to be expensive and inconvenient.



1



Reply to Gordon Scruggs



The comment Gordon Scruggs is replying to has been deleted.



Gordon Scruggs

Rob Dentremont improve=increase capacity to meet future demand.

9w Like Reply Hide



The comment Rob Dentremont is replying to has been deleted.



Rob Dentremont

Gordon Scruggs "improve=increase capacity to meet future demand."

Some people believe that more capacity only induces the demand. Just one source of myriad:... [See more](#)

9w Like Reply Hide

The comment Gordon Scruggs is replying to has been deleted.



Gordon Scruggs

Rob Dentremont by the way, I like the article. But it says roadway demands are determined the same as in the past. This is not true for DFW. The transportation authority maintains traffic models of the entire north Texas area. These models incorporate detailed projected increased populations, trips people make to work, and other data. The modeling used is very sophisticated.

9w Like Reply Hide

The comment Gordon Scruggs is replying to has been deleted.



Gordon Scruggs

Rob Dentremont so improving our roadways is not making a difference?

9w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Rob Dentremont



Christopher Bird

I am lucky enough to live close to one of the DART lines. And I am old. So if I am thinking of having a glass of wine at a downtown Dallas haunt, I can pay \$1.50 vs \$50.00 at least for rideshare. I wish the coverage were broader, but, at least for me, DART is really convenient.

1w Like Reply Hide



Ganga Pathak

Shimano Bacharach abhiyan

1w Like Reply Hide



Ganga Pathak

Chora Bacharach aa hiya

1w Like Reply Hide



Kit Behringer

Need to fix the holes in the freeways

9w Like Reply Hide



Gordon Scruggs replied · 2 Replies



Kelly Dennison

It's not. I live in Arlington. America's largest city without public transportation.

1w Like Reply Hide



Lauri John

I wish that there were a regional transportation system that included Arlington & Mansfield.

9w Like Reply Hide



Gordon Scruggs

Lauri John it does include Arlington and Mansfield. It is for transportation in all



1



Joe Tarkington
Gordon Scruggs As I said previously, Arlington gets no money for mass transit because they don't have any.

9w Like Reply Hide

2 🙄 😏



Gordon Scruggs
Joe Tarkington you are correct, they have no mass transportation. But they receive a significant amount of transportation funds for roadways. In fact, most of the funds spent in the Dallas for Worth area is on roadways. One example is the current roadway interchange at I 30 and SH 360. 🙄

9w Like Reply Hide Edited



Ken Duble
Gordon Scruggs Yes, but NCTCOG doesn't operate transit. What they do is regional planning and providing assistance in securing grants

1w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Gordon Scruggs



Joe Tarkington
Lauri John Arlington should have joined DART, but chose not to. I have seen it said many times, Arlington is the largest city in the United States that does not have public transit.

9w Like Reply Hide

24 🙄 😏 🙄



Mi Licater
Joe Tarkington Arlington taxpayers are currently funding THREE varieties of PUBLIC TRANSIT: Via, (or whatever name they changed it to) HandiTran, and the UTA student buses.

THREE already. You're welcome.

8w Like Reply Hide

2 🙄 😏



Joel Wasinger
Mi Licater Arlington's participation in mass transit has been late, haphazard and only after considerable prodding. Meanwhile y'all are funding all kinds of professional sports nonsense. No thanks.

8w Like Reply Hide

6 🙄 😏



Annabelle Griffin Randolph
Mi Licater not good enough. We need light rail running into the entertainment district.

8w Like Reply Hide

3 😏 🙄



Mi Licater
Joel Wasinger If these were actually 'professional' sports... they wouldn't require TAXPAYER PROPPING.

Great gig they've got, no?

And no, 'mass transit' is a myth. Arlington taxpayers are already forced to fund THREE DIFFERENT VARIETIES OF 'PUBLIC TRANSIT':

- HANDITRAN
- VIA
- MAVS MOVER (UTA student buses)

8w Like Reply Hide

😏



Randy Fischer
Annabelle Griffin Randolph If you have the money to build it, go for it.

5w Like Reply Hide



1



Ken Duble

Joe Tarkington I don't know what the enabling legislation permits for non-contiguous cities beyond Dallas County. Arlington had an election to join the T a few years back, but declined.

In 1980, a referendum would have created the Lone Star Transit Authority to encompass cities in the Metroplex, but not enough cities voted to join to move the idea forward.

LSTA would have had a penny-per-dollar tax, same as DART. Dallas approved it but FW was among the cities that didn't. The idea was ahead of its time.

Even in the DART area, cities weren't willing to approve debt to build out a commuter rail system. That's how we ended up with LRT. Unlike Atlanta San Francisco or the DC, DART never had the funding capacity nor the debt approval to build a system capable of covering distances at sufficient speed to make sense

1w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Joe Tarkington



Jim Gyurkovic

Lauri John there is,

It's called the **#VISION34Corridor** by Smart City Texas.

Our invention is an innovative transit solution for this metroplex which mirrors the line that founded it. From July 2 1902- Christmas Eve 1934 Northern Texas Traction company operated the INTERURBAN Electric Railway from Dallas to Ft Worth VIA Arlington.

The entire Right of way remains from this line- JEFFERSON. LANCASTER. DIVISION.

1 road 32 miles 100 ft wide-

We have been gaining traction with advancing this project in Dallas even last evening in Ft Worth, The problem lies right here in Arlington with the City manager Trey Yelverton, and our Mayor and my former lawyer Ross.

The single greatest impediment to progress in this entire metroplex are those 2 men.

8w Like Reply Hide



Mi Licater

Jim Gyurkovic They aren't 'standing in the way'... they simply haven't yet concocted a sufficient means of gravy for themselves off it.

Previous 'mayor' Willy will get his gravy with civil engineering contracts; Y and Big Hoss Ross will 'object' until they're satisfied with their pieces of the pie.

Then all of Arlington will be f [REDACTED]

7w Like Reply Hide



Steve Springfield

Jim Gyurkovic The current voters in Arlington wanted these men and their actions. Current Arlington voters can change Arlington by voting in future elections.

5w Like Reply Hide



Randy Fischer

Jim Gyurkovic What happened to the Interurban? Not enough passengers to support it?

5w Like Reply Hide



Jim Gyurkovic

Randy Fischer the Interurban route between Dallas and Ft Worth was profitable and award winning 4 separate times in the 20s.

What killed the Interurbans was the Depression, Drilling oil and the New



1



Randy Fischer

Jim Gyurkovic ... In other words, lawsuits and lack of passengers killed it. Do you think it would be profitable today? Or would it lose money faster than DART does today?

5w Like Reply Hide



Ken Duble

Jim Gyurkovic True, but funding would be a challenge. The TX Leg is currently micromanaging municipalities. They aren't in a mood to grant autonomy for anything not favored by the oil and gas industry.

1w Like Reply Hide



Jim Gyurkovic

Ken Duble theoretically yes. However Brightline in Florida is the first private Transit operator in over 100 years . They built the high speed line from Miami to Orlando and also are the ones who will be constructing the Las Vegas to LA line.
Arlington TX is the crossroads of American history my friends. Nowhere else do you have the history we have. And we are absolutely underselling our importance to American and Texas History at a profound level. Example- Handley Hill the far southwest corner of Arlington is the location of an ancient Indian burial ground, a historic African American Cemetery (Ebenezer) built on top of it, The site of the May 24, 1841 Battle of Village Creek where General Edward H Tarrant, and Captain John B Denton (Killed in Action). Cleared the Indian villages which led to the Treaty at Birds Fort in present day River Legacy park. This hilltop also is where the very first of its kind Electric steam generating station was built, a Dam was built by the Northern Texas Traction Company exclusively for sustainable transit. WE CALL IT Lake Arlington now. Now this INTERURBAN ELECTRIC RAILWAY between Dallas and Ft Worth via Arlington ushered in the modern era of Texas history July 2, 1902. 33 years this system operated transporting over 20 million passengers.
The very first Intercontinental concrete paved roadway was built here in the Bankhead Highway which still is visible sitting between Division St and UP line. The UP was the very first Intercontinental Railroad in the southern route just 6 years after the first transcontinental railroad was finished.
The very first Intercontinental telephone cable was run here by who we now call ATT.
So it is absolutely ridiculous and disingenuous for any elected official inside this city to say that this can't be done. It will be done. It is inevitable. It is worth an unquantifiable fortune in taxable income for this city, and is a critical requirement to our survival. It's is called the **#VISION34CORRIDOR** for a reason, because the next Mayor will be constructing this. The catalyst for the future of the. Crossroads of America and the gateway between the East and where the west begins, also from the past to the future brother..
It is never a good thing to look into the future with eyes of fear. . (AB Harriman).

1w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Jim Gyurkovic



Mark Olson

Lauri John Arlington always has plenty of money for Jerry World and Globe Life. Much more important than mass transit. You get what you pay for. The only reason Hurst got a TRE Stop is because Bell Helicopter donated the land and wanted it for it's employees. No thanks to City of Hurst itself. The stop was originally announced as Hurst Bell. That was quickly changed to only Bell.

8w Like Reply Hide





1



Mi Licater

Mark Olson If few people will use it, EVERYONE shouldn't be forced to fund it. That is only fair. Bell wanted it, so BELL funded it. That's the way this should ALL work.

For all those whining about 'lack of mobility'... set yourselves on ANY intersection in either Dallas or Fort Worth, and witness how many EMPTY BUSES pass by.

The vast majority of buses are EMPTY, the vast MAJORITY of the day. They always have been empty. One of the greatest scams perpetrated.

The Interurban was PRIVATELY owned and operated. Nobody ever mentions that. When it ceased to be profitable, it FOLDED.

"The Texas Interurban Railway lines to Terrell and Denton, placed in operation in 1923 and '24 respectively, were among the last interurban lines to be built in the entire United States. In fact, even before they were built it was realized they would not be profitable, and Electric Bond and Share, a utilities holding company, committed to the city of Dallas to build the lines because of its railway contract, offered to pay half a million dollars to be let off the hook – but Dallas said, "Build!" so build they did, utilizing the Katy branch to Denton by electrifying it. "

Which is precisely why American taxpayers get to fund Amtrack: government idiots decided it was 'needed' after it ceased to be profitable. And we've been throwing sand down that rat-hole ever since.

7w Like Reply Hide



Randy Fischer

Mi Licater EXACTLY.

5w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Mark Olson



Reply to Lauri John



Lorna Dallas

Some of the train cars smell like urine

1w Like Reply Hide



Melanie Vanlandingham

A well connected, expansive network with both local and rapid bus transit will be essential. The current bus network is neither. Bus trips take hours due to inadequate routes, persistent safety and perception issues, and recent REDUCTIONS on routes. DART needs a force of bus monitors and police to improve safety and perception of safety, and an on-going, spirited marketing plan to boost ridership. But the poor local network will never be successful to meet transit goals of reducing the need for a car.

4w Like Reply Hide 2



Gordon Scruggs

Melanie Vanlandingham NCTCOG handles funding, you need to contact DART.

1w Like Reply Hide



Melanie Vanlandingham

Gordon Scruggs NCTCOG coordinates with DART for longterm regional planning.

1w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Gordon Scruggs





1



Kayla Rae Sikora

Melanie Vanlandingham it would help also if someone is waiting for a bus that they have more than a bus sign without any shade and no where to sit.

The walk to my nearest bus stop is half a mile. Then I would have to stand at that bus stop with no re... [See more](#)

1w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Melanie Vanlandingham



Cynthia Phagan Bittick

The trains in Tarrant County - TexRail - need to go to where people want to go - like a stop in the stockyards and at the zoo!

And the train from Dallas and the train from Fort Worth end in two DIFFERENT terminals. They should be connected!

9w Like Reply Hide Edited 18



Bill Cahill

Cynthia Phagan Bittick It's a five minute bus ride from North Side Station to the stockyards, it's really easy and the day pass covers the bus too.

With regards to Texrail going to Terminal B and DART going to Terminal A, it's a short walk between terminals there at the stations. It would be really unwieldy to route rails to the same terminals in the space that they have.

8w Like Reply Hide

5



Cynthia Phagan Bittick

Bill Cahill Those transitions are hard to do with suitcases - especially for people from out of town or out of the country, or locals who are just unfamiliar with the specific area, and for people traveling with children.

8w Like Reply Hide

2



Matt Reed

Bill Cahill just do not understand the stockyard stop not being walking distance to the stockyard as the grapevine train stops in the stockyards

8w Like Reply Hide



Cynthia Phagan Bittick

Matt Reed I've traveled the train many times and it's never gone through or near the stockyards, much less stopped in the stockyards.

7w Like Reply Hide



Nancy Wyrick Hamouch

Bill Cahill and that, my friend, is the problem. What is easy for YOU now, may not always be easy for me and my 93 yr old mother.

3w Like Reply Hide



Bill Cahill

Nancy Wyrick Hamouch I completely understand. But they can't put a train station everywhere. If you look at the DFW airport, if they were able to bring all of the tracks to a common area large enough for a station, it would be pretty far from any terminal.

3w Like Reply Hide



Brian Abraham

Cynthia Phagan Bittick Matt Reed may be talking about the Trantula that goes (or use to go) from Stockards to Grapevine.

2w Like Reply Hide Edited



Ken Duble

Bill Cahill I'm quite impressed with FW's current mayor. She's extending TX Rail. She seems to want to get transit done.

1w Like Reply Hide



1



Daniel Muller

It is not very well signed at all, but the Texrail terminal east of Terminal B and the DART terminal west of Terminal A are very close to each other and on the same (lower) level. As easily walkable as any other transfer (except when DART lines share the same station in the city of Dallas), especially at DFW.

1w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Bill Cahill



Kayla Rae Sikora

Cynthia Phagan Bittick and there needs to be more train lines and train stations that are within walking distance for anyone who can walk.

8w Like Reply Hide

5



Charlie Davis

Kayla Rae Sikora I agree Kayla

8w Like Reply Hide 3



Ken Duble

Kayla Rae Sikora Transport to and from stations is best performed by buses. The only way to bring rail stations close to everyone without destroying the city is tunneling. The Metroplex lacks the density to make that cost effective.

1w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Kayla Rae Sikora



Jason Willingham

Cynthia Phagan Bittick exactly awhile back I looked at trying to take mass transportation from SW FW to Plano. It would take me almost three hours one way.

8w Like Reply Hide

3



Brian Abraham

Jason Willingham the train from DFW AIRPORT to Plano comes on line in 2026.

2w Like Reply Hide



Jason Willingham

Brian Abraham, the last time I looked was a while ago, and I would have had to wait on a combination of train and bus. My route would have been from FW to DFW to Dallas, then bus to Plano; it was ridiculous.

2w Like Reply Hide



Brian Abraham

Jason Willingham well prepare to rejoice. You will be able to go from Fort Worth to the DFW North Station then transfer to the DART Silver line along the Cottonbelt rail right of way on to the Plano Richland area.

2w Like Reply Hide



Ken Duble

Jason Willingham We need a few direct trains through Grapevine that would bypass the airport. I addressed this in an earlier comment.

1w Like Reply Hide



Daniel Muller

The DART "Silver Line" from DFW to Plano will help with that. RSN.

1w Like Reply Hide



1



Ken Duble

Daniel Muller Not adequately. One must exit the train, cross the platform, then wait for another train to continue one's trip.

The disadvantage of public transportation over driving is the last mile dilemma at each end. A train traveling with a top sp... [See more](#)

1w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Jason Willingham



Reply to Cynthia Phagan Bittick



Xiaolan Zhou

The drive to go to a concert the Meyerson Symphony for me often times takes 80-90 minutes. Riding the Orange/Red line Dart, it is 60 minutes from my door to the lobby if the concert hall, without having to pay for parking as a bonus! Can't wait for the Silver Line to open.

1w Like Reply Hide 2



Aileen M Schettino

Texas needs mass transit.

8w Like Reply Hide 10



Randy Fischer

Aileen M Schettino I think Greyhound still exists.

5w Like Reply Hide



John Brandt

Randy Fischer Greyhound is not mass transit.

3w Like Reply Hide



Randy Fischer

John Brandt Really? Neither is a train.

3w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Randy Fischer



Julee Salzman Kilpatrick

Aileen M Schettino Amtrak

4w Like Reply Hide



Ken Duble

Aileen M Schettino Like reproductive rights and gun safety, it doesn't matter if people don't take those convictions into the polling booth.

1w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Aileen M Schettino



Joe Tarkington

I have a question too. Why would a regional transit authority have its offices in no transit Arlington?

10w Like Reply Hide Edited 10



Chap Dan Mel-dez

Joe Tarkington easier to control if it's local

10w Like Reply Hide



Joe Tarkington

Chap Dan Mel-dez DART is local and one of three systems that provide transit for Dallas Ft worth. However Arlington has chosen to not have public transit.

9w Like Reply Hide





1

9w Like Reply Hide 2



Ken Duble

Joe Tarkington True, but the larger picture is they've devoted the available sales tax revenue to other areas.

1w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Chap Dan Mel-dez



Rob Dentremont

Joe Tarkington "Why would a regional transit authority have its offices in no transit Arlington?" - Great question. I was told, by someone who has a NCTCOG employee friend, that "...their location is basically impossible to get to without driving." So any "leadership by example" is conveniently excused. Biking to work is great - for other people.

9w Like Reply Hide 6



Gordon Scruggs

Joe Tarkington The regional transportation Authority covers all of North Central Texas. it includes highway, rail and air transportation systems. Not just mass transportation. ~~JOB JOB~~

9w Like Reply Hide 2



Author

NCTCOG Transportation Department

Joe Tarkington Thanks for your question. Unlike regional transit authorities, such as DART, DCTA, or Trinity Metro, NCTCOG is not a transit authority, but the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth region. We play a critical role in guiding the expenditure of federal and state transportation funds in the Dallas-Fort Worth region for all modes of transportation, not just public transit. Our office is in Arlington, the region's geographic center, and our focus is on creating comprehensive and inclusive transportation solutions that benefit the entire community.

We appreciate your inquiry and are committed to ensuring a well-rounded approach to transportation planning and solutions to connect North Texans to places they need to go.

If you have any more questions or if there's anything specific you'd like to discuss, please feel free to reach out. We're here to engage with the community and work towards improving transportation for everyone.

8w Like Reply 2



Joe Tarkington

NCTCOG Transportation Department So being in the geographic center of DFW is more important than being in area where the people that actually ride transit. I live in Dallas, even if you were in Ft Worth it would be better than being nowhere. You are sending the wrong message. It's time to move and become accountable.

8w Like Reply Hide 6



Randy Fischer

NCTCOG Transportation Department ... Federal funding? Why do we need federal funding for local transportation? Why should someone in ME or WA be paying for our local projects? WE should be paying for these projects since we are the ones using and benefitting from them.

8w Like Reply Hide 1



Kelli Anne Busey

NCTCOG Transportation Department there is absolutely no public transport available in SW Arlington. The Mayor proudly called Arlington 'the donut hole' for that reason. Now I hear they want a bus system for the rich to get to the stadiums. Great. Just great.

7w Like Reply Hide Edited 4



1



Gordon Scruggs
Kelli Anne Busey that is a local issue and has nothing to do with NCTCOG. 🙄🙄

5w Like Reply Hide



Gordon Scruggs
Randy Fischer that is a congressional issue and has nothing to do with NCTCOG. 🙄🙄

5w Like Reply Hide



Gordon Scruggs
Joe Tarkington NCTCOG has nothing to do with your local transit, other than funding. Your local city and county officials make decisions on what type of transit is in your area. 🙄🙄

5w Like Reply Hide



Joe Tarkington
Gordon Scruggs Not totally true. Everything DART builds has federal funding. If there is no federal funding, DART does not build. He who has the gold rules.

5w Like Reply Hide



Randy Fischer
Gordon Scruggs The question was, why does DFW metro need federal funding? If DFW metro wants something DFW metro ought to be collecting taxes for that something.

5w Like Reply Hide



Randy Fischer
NCTCOG Transportation Department In other words - another level of bureaucracy that we must pay.

5w Like Reply Hide



Ken Duble
Joe Tarkington While DART has federal funding, such funding isn't available without local participation. In the case of DART member cities, this consists of a penny-per-dollar sales tax.

As the state caps total sales taxes, this tool isn't available to Arlington. The city has devoted the revenue to other needs.

1w Like Reply Hide



Reply to NCTCOG Transportation Department



Reply to Joe Tarkington



Albert Mantell
My family lives in Arlington. I live in Ft.Worth. No bus will take me there. I'm tired of the mess at I-20 & Mansfield Hwy.

5w Like Reply Hide 3 👍



Gordon Scruggs
Albert Mantell you need to let Arlington know. They do not want to participate in mass transit. 🙄🙄

1w Like Reply Hide 😏



Albert Mantell
Gordon Scruggs Arlington knows all about their NO transportation policy. That's what they voted for.

1w Like Reply Hide 👍



Reply to Gordon Scruggs



Reply to Albert Mantell





1



Kyle Smolarek

We need to be able to walk or cycle safely to access basic needs like grocery stores, not just recreational trails. Higher bus and train frequency would make public transit more practical and more people would choose it, meaning less cars on the road.

3w Like Reply Hide 6



Michael Seiber

Joycelyn Williams the games will be in Arlington. Not Dallas. I am surprised that all cost money to implement and who is willing to pay higher taxes? But interestingly they can find money to build parks over major highways... For as long as I have lived here Dallas has failed to progress and now filled with liberals in power positions it has become a hell hole .. now that is just my opinion

1w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Kyle Smolarek



Ed Farrar

TexDot forces traffic, because of construction, onto toll lanes?

6w Like Reply Hide Edited



Gordon Scruggs

Ed Farrar when did that happen?

1w Like Reply Hide



Ed Farrar

Gordon Scruggs they are working to expand loop 820.

A few weeks ago I was coming down I 35 and because of the construction or preparing for construction all traffic was routed onto the express lane.... [See more](#)

1w Like Reply Hide



Ed Farrar

Gordon Scruggs



1w Like Reply Hide



Ed Farrar

This is part of 820. Notice the center lanes (toll lanes) are open but the others are closed.

1w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Gordon Scruggs



Reply to Ed Farrar



Clay Wilson

Ahhhh another COG look in for new ways to disrupt lives and waste tax money!

3w Like Reply Hide



Gordon Scruggs

Clay Wilson they are in the process of funding most of the highway improvements around the area and many other roadway, rail, and airport improvements. If you think they should not be funded, you need to let them know.



1



Reply to Clay Wilson



Michael Seiber

Do you folk know what NCTCOG stands for? It is like minimum of 7 counties decided what should/shouldn't be done for mobility throughout the region. Some of these roadway plans have been on the books for 50 years.

2w Like Reply Hide



Gordon Scruggs

Michael Seiber <https://www.nctcog.org/nctcog-region-map>

1w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Michael Seiber



Andrew D Hess

We have a fantastic, extremely efficient, and award-winning highway system here in Dallas. It takes less than 20 min. to go point to point to most places in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex by car. Maybe expanded capital expenditures for things like buses and light rail trains would be better spent subsidizing the use of Uber and other taxi services say for vouchers for those who do not own a car or can't drive or helping those with limited resources buy entry-level vehicles or a work truck to facilitate their economically productive activities.

From a time-needed perspective to travel from point A to Point B around town, nothing beats a car in Dallas!

9w Like Reply Hide Edited

13 😄👍🤔



Leslie Young

Andrew D Hess You must live in a different DFW Metroplex than I.

2w Like Reply Hide

5 👍😬



Reply to Andrew D Hess



Bob Galveston

The large venues need better traffic control for the ride share drop offs and pick ups. The RevO Ride share app is saving the ride clients around 15 percent versus Lyft or Uber.

RevORideShareDFW

2w Like Reply Hide 👍



Pat Roth Gouldy

How will our current transportation system handle the upcoming 2026 World Cup? How will people staying in Dallas and Ft. Worth get here? No busses, no trains.. no alternates, only driving.

9w Like Reply Hide 9 👍❤️😬



Mi Licater

Pat There will be shuttles, buses, etc. No need to build an entire, PERMANENT system for a SINGLE event.

8w Like Reply Hide

2 👍



Brian Abraham

Mi Licater don't forget that those buses and shuttles will be trapped in gridlock right along with all the other millions of cars for that one event. But a permanent system IS needed for daily transportation.

2w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Mi Licater



Joycelyn Williams

Pat Roth Gouldy the TRE goes from Fort Worth to Dallas. DART and Trinity Metro go to DFW. Hope this helps.

7w Like Reply Hide



1



Pat Roth Gouldy
Joycelyn Williams thanks, I'm aware of these resources. However, the stop is just south of the airport, no help to any of us.

7w Like Reply Hide

2



Joycelyn Williams
Pat Roth Gouldy definitely take the survey if you haven't. They need to hear from people who will potentially ride the system and why they don't currently.

7w Like Reply Hide

4



Reply to Joycelyn Williams



Reply to Pat Roth Gouldy



Debbie Greenlee
Terrible. We have no real public transportation. Arlington has a few "taxis." We need trains from Dallas to Arlington to Fort Worth to Weatherford with busses that take you to/from the stations to downtown areas and neighborhoods.

9w Like Reply Hide 10



Joe Tarkington
Debbie Greenlee Arlington has chosen to not join DART. I have seen it said, more than once, that Arlington is the largest city in the United States that does not have public transit.

9w Like Reply Hide

4



Debbie Greenlee
Joe Tarkington True on both counts! It's shameful that Arlington and the rest of D/FW doesn't have a good public transportation system. We choose to add lanes to highways which only adds more cars.

9w Like Reply Hide

6



Debbie Greenlee
Ben Claybour I doubt that. Look at New York, Chicago, San Francisco!

7w Like Reply Hide

2



Debbie Greenlee
Ben Claybour According to what you provided, DART uses a LIGHT RAIL system which is different than the larger, longer, rail systems used in the cities I mentioned above.

7w Like Reply Hide

2



Debbie Greenlee
Ben Claybour That has nothing to do with my original statement. BTW I live in Texas. That is why I originally commented.

7w Like Reply Hide

4



Brian Abraham
Joe Tarkington I don't think Arlington would have been eligible to joint DART given its not being in the Dallas area/County. Now it should absolutely be a part of what's now called Trinity Metro.

2w Like Reply Hide

2



Reply to Joe Tarkington



Brian Abraham
Debbie Greenlee The Arlington elite are mainly responsible for that. Every time a vote came up, they continuously pushed the narrative that mass transit would bring more less fortunate people to the city. Later on, they used the maximum allowable percentage of sales tax revenue to help fund Cheateer, AT&T, then Club Life. Last I read, they just don't have



1

2w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Debbie Greenlee



Michael Seiber
Sucks

2w Like Reply Hide



Lee H.A.
Ppl are vaping in DART light rail

2w Like Reply Hide



Luiz Rodriguez
Amen

2w Like Reply Hide



John Tipton Masterson
The handicapped cars are filled with non-handicapped people sleeping in the mornings to the point that there are mornings when the handicapped cannot get a seat. This happens day after day.

3w Like Reply Hide



Sandi Dreer
My biggest pain point is being unable to travel via transit to non-member cities of Dart (Frisco, McKinney).

3w Like Reply Hide



Justin W. Allison
Fix the I 35 W south bound at Belknap 4 lanes down to 2 lanes!!! No more confused tollways!!

7w Like Reply Hide 3



Gary Simonson
Justin W. Allison they probably did that intentionally to force us onto the grossly overpriced toll lanes. Funny how much cheaper the Chisholm Trail tollway is, but it serves the west side where the decent people live in Fort Worth. Yes, that's sarcasm. We see it, ok? NE Tarrant is getting raped on tolla.

7w Like Reply Hide Edited



Harry Cating
Justin W. Allison Agreed but, oh gad, let's not start that construction again!!!

5w Like Reply Hide



Sydney Claridge
Justin W. Allison even those using the toll lanes have to deal with this bottleneck if they wish to travel from I-35W southbound to I-30 westbound.

3w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Justin W. Allison



Lang Origer Christopher
Where are the subways and the high-speed rail and the busses where is a good intermodal system for in the city and regional and national. In Europe I could take public transport and a train across continents.

3w Like Reply Hide 4



Charlie Morrow
Great improvement on I-35W North & TX 170. However, many, many streets on the north side of Fort Worth are HORRIBLE. And most streets in Dallas are in sad shape.

7w Like Reply Hide 4



Lang Origer Christopher
Charlie Morrow Yep pretty bad roads south Dallas around the VAMC

3w Like Reply Hide



1



Law Madsen

Spending over \$40 a day to commute only to knock an hour and 1/2 off my commute time. It seem to be working well for the greedy MF's in charge of the express lanes.

3w Like Reply Hide Edited



Donna Youngs

My work would subsidize public transportation but the system here would require me to walk many miles, take trains and buses... and take multiple hours. We've looked at taking the train to love field...2 hours by public transportation walking, buses and trains, or 35 minutes by driving...

9w Like Reply Hide 8



Kayla Rae Sikora

Donna Youngs is there a park and ride that would help you to not have to make too many transfers?

8w Like Reply Hide



Donna Youngs

Kayla Rae Sikora nope.

8w Like Reply Hide



Kayla Rae Sikora

Donna Youngs I hope all of that changes soon. We live in a modern metropolis stuck in the 1930s.

8w Like Reply Hide



Reply to Kayla Rae Sikora

The comment Randy Fischer is replying to has been deleted.



Randy Fischer

Ben Claybour You were about DART being the biggest. Now you want to add in the TRE. We can do that - keep in mind CTA is much larger than DART

5w Like Reply Hide

The comment Randy Fischer is replying to has been deleted.



Randy Fischer

Ben Claybour Didn't I say 93 miles? I think I did.

The times I gave you are from my house at the time of my comment. That transit time will get a little better when the new rail line is finished. But still not close to driving - even during rush hour.

The only way that light rail times might be close to driving times are if one lives right next to a rail station and doesn't have to change buses or trains.

5w Like Reply Hide

The comment Randy Fischer is replying to has been deleted.



Randy Fischer

Ben Claybour In order

NY metro 248 miles

Washington DC 129 miles

Boston 114 miles

Chicago 103 miles

Check out the heavy rail going in and out of the city centers.

Then we can look at the passenger numbers for each.

Sorry I had inadvertently used the length of the NYC system in my earlier comment.

5w Like Reply Hide

The comment Randy Fischer is replying to has been deleted.



1



Randy Fischer

Ben Claybour Nice bragging point. 93 miles of rail - 73k passengers per day. Compared to San Diego. 65 miles of rail - 130k passengers per day. Yeah, the DCTA connects to DART in Lewisville. So? Does that change what I said about time spent?

This from Apple Maps:

Drive to DFW in 34 minutes.

Transit to DFW in 2 hours 9 minutes.

AND if you miss a connection, you can add a half hour of time because the next bus/train doesn't run for another 30 minutes.

5w Like Reply Hide

The comment Randy Fischer is replying to has been deleted.



Randy Fischer

Ben Claybour I shouldn't have used the initials. Sorry. I was talking about the Chicago Transit Authority. They use the 3rd rail system rather than overhead lines.

5w Like Reply Hide

The comment Randy Fischer is replying to has been deleted.



Randy Fischer

Ben Claybour And if she lives in Denton or McKinney?

Or if she has to walk a mile to the TRE stop? And then wait for the next train?

All that works fine if you live on the rail line and only need to go to the airport.

5w Like Reply Hide

The comment Randy Fischer is replying to has been deleted.



Randy Fischer

Ben Claybour IDK what's going on here. Apparently, my comments have all been deleted by the NTCOG. And some yours have been deleted as well.

5w Like Reply Hide

Author

NCTCOG Transportation Department

Hi Randy and Ben,

We haven't deleted any comments on our end. It looks like an earlier commenter may have deleted their response, and so any replies you've made under that thread would be affected. Thank you for bringing this to our attention, and please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any further questions!

4w Like Reply Edited



Reply to Randy Fischer



Reply to Donna Youngs



America Izaguirre

N vi m

4w Like Reply Hide



America Izaguirre

Lo

4w Like Reply Hide



Patty Carten Bravo

It's not. We need efficient, safe commuter rail service

9w Like Reply Hide 11



Daniel Muller

As a daily rider, I am pretty sure that just two improvements could save DART:

1. Check fares, check fares, and check fares. (Actually, no one ever checks my fare anymore because I have a tap card -- ???)

2. Crack down on smoking on platforms. Even better, ask all people on the

6w Like Reply Hide

2



Reply to Patty Carten Bravo



MarySue Foster

How about reversing the NTTA decision to close a few miles of the road for rail construction during eclipse weekend when we are expecting tens of thousands of visitors on our already crowded roads?

6w Like Reply Hide 4



Joshua Demond Tyson

We need txdot to add more lighting onto the highways particularly IH20 in South Dallas

7w Like Reply Hide 8



Masa Ali

I live in Irving. I was relying on the yellow bus Dart , but they changed that few years ago, I used to take from Northgate through Beltline all the way to downtown Dallas. Now it is no longer running on that route , so that's really pissed me off and restricted my movement.that's bad and very negative experience to me .

7w Like Reply Hide



Chris Youngs

I use the TexRail to DFW all the time and it's a great way to get around. The real issue is DFW is so large, public transportation is problematic because of geography. Take DFW Airport, it's bigger than Manhattan Island. It sits in the middle of the DFW-Denton metro area, which is now over 8M people. It takes me an hour + to drive what used to be 30minutes. Traffic, while still long is way better than LA.

7w Like Reply Hide Edited 6



Kirk Breidenstein

I'm 63 and gave up driving a car, just too expensive. I ride my E bike the 2 miles down Preston to work everyday and have my doubts I will see 64.

7w Like Reply Hide Edited 3



Matt Reed

Everytime family comes to town they want to go to the stockyards. Was thinking of send them on the train.

7w Like Reply Hide



Shawn Edgar
lol horribly

7w Like Reply Hide

[View more comments](#)

50 of 79

MINUTES

**Regional Transportation Council
PUBLIC MEETING**

Planning Advances for High-Speed Rail Between Dallas and Fort Worth

2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

New National Air Quality Standard: Fine Particulate Matter

Proposed Amendments to Mobility 2045 - 2022 Update

Meeting Date and Location

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) held a hybrid public meeting Monday, May 13, 2024, at noon in Arlington. Patrons could attend in person, via phone or view the live stream at www.publicinput.com/nctcogMay24. Dan Lamers, Senior Program Manager, moderated the meeting attended by 123 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:

- Planning Advances for High-Speed Rail Between Dallas and Fort Worth – **presented by Brendon Wheeler**
- 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – **presented by Cody Derrick**
- New National Air Quality Standard: Fine Particulate Matter – **presented by Daniela Tower**

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/nctcogMay24.

Summary of Presentations

Planning Advances for High-Speed Rail Between Dallas and Fort Worth presentation:
<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/4b1bd333-151b-4f81-8d22-d7e0dfc90f01/Planning-Advances-for-High-Speed-Rail-between-Dallas-and-Fort-Worth.pdf>

The High-Speed Transportation Connections Study traverses Dallas, Irving, Cockrell Hill, Grand Prairie, Arlington, Pantego, Dalworthington Gardens, Hurst, Euless, Bedford, Richland Hills, North Richland Hills, Haltom City and Fort Worth.

The study's purpose is to:

- Evaluate high-speed transportation alternatives, including alignments and technology

- Connect Dallas-Fort Worth to other high-performance passenger systems in Texas
- Enhance and connect the Dallas-Fort Worth regional transportation system
- Obtain federal environmental approval of the viable alternative

The study is currently in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Environmental reviews are conducted during this phase to assess the potential environmental implications of the proposed actions. Once this process is completed, NCTCOG will be able to investigate financial and operational options through public/private partnerships for implementation.

The NEPA process is expected to conclude in Spring 2025. For more information on the High-Speed Transportation Connections Study and to sign up for project notices, visit www.nctcog.org/dfw-hstcs.

2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/90db971e-7ac3-4d59-bfe1-05d995b4bed1/2025-2028-Transportation-Improvement-Program-TIP.pdf>

The TIP is a funding and inventory document of transportation projects within the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan planning boundary. It is mandated by the federal and State government and contains funding from federal, State and local sources. A new TIP is developed every two years and updated on a quarterly basis.

NCTCOG staff is currently reviewing existing projects, gathering information on additional locally funded projects, making needed revisions to existing project schedules and funding, and developing revised project listings for Fiscal Years 2025 through 2028. The draft 2025-2028 TIP roadway and transit list includes approximately \$8.42 billion in funding and 1,132 roadway and transit projects.

The RTC will take action on the 2023-2026 TIP on Thursday, June 13, 2024.

New National Air Quality Standard: Fine Particulate Matter presentation:

<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/095a78ce-3eec-4dbf-b265-bb7b0ec5a019/New-National-Air-Quality-Standard-Fine-Particulate-Matter.pdf>

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently lowered the fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) standard from 12 to 9 micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m³). This adjustment carries significant implications for regulatory timelines. Effective February 7, 2024, this change will shape future decisions and strategies based on monitored data. While other particulate matter standards remain unchanged, the primary annual standard has been modified.

Monitoring stations play a crucial role in assessing air quality, particularly in densely populated areas like Dallas and Tarrant Counties. Despite some monitors in outlying counties showing compliance, the potential for non-attainment looms in more populated areas. Factors beyond local emissions, such as meteorological conditions and geographic features, can influence PM_{2.5} levels. The EPA's designation process for non-attainment areas involves a comprehensive analysis, considering factors like monitor values, chemical precursors, weather patterns and geographical features.

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is responsible for submitting crucial data to the EPA by May 1, 2024. Public engagement and data collection efforts are underway to meet the end-of-year deadline for the designation package. The final decision on non-

attainment designations is expected by February 6, 2026, potentially triggering the implementation of revisions to State Implementation Plans (SIP). Despite challenges, various programs and grants are available to NCTCOG to support efforts to maintain or achieve compliance with air quality standards.

Summary of Online Review and Comment Topics

Proposed Administrative Amendments to the Mobility 2045 - 2022 Update **handout:**
<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/405fb440-e310-45fe-8d5f-43c013530bea/Proposed-Amendments-to-Mobility-2045-%e2%80%93-2022-Update.pdf>

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

COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE MEETING

Planning Advances for High-Speed Rail Between Dallas and Fort Worth

David Yaqubian, Citizen

A. Project investors

Question: Your presentation noted that you are negotiating with Amtrak. Is that correct? Have you spoken with foreign investors? Did any of them stand out?

Summary of response by Brendon Wheeler: Yes, we've had several conversations with Amtrak, especially since they've come onto the scene over the last year or so. We have spoken with foreign investors in the past, and they are concerned with the NEPA process because it poses a potential risk because they can't control the NEPA process, timing, or cost. Texas Central was more the exception than the rule because they accepted the NEPA process and have spent hundreds of millions of dollars with nothing to show for it yet, which is a significant risk for a private investor. NCTCOG, as the regional metropolitan planning organization, can advance the NEPA process for this corridor, much like we do for the dozens of highway, arterial and commuter rail projects in our region on a daily basis.

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: A few countries including China, Spain, Italy, and Japan have expressed interest in our regional high-speed transportation project. Texas Central is partnering with Amtrak, but they were initially working with the Japan railway high-speed rail industry. This technology was approved for use in the Houston-to-Dallas corridor. This project is unique as it is not as ubiquitous as the US rail system. Each operator uses slightly different technologies, such as different gauges and electricity sources. The goal is to clear these differences and have serious conversations with these operators to ensure a smooth transition. The gauge of the track remains the same, but the use of an electric catenary can vary.

B. Project funding

Question: Has the team heard of the High-Speed Rail Act? If that were to pass, could that fund this project?

Summary of response by Brendon Wheeler: Absolutely. The last transportation bill by Congress, the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail (FSP) Grant Program, allocated \$66

billion towards passenger rail, including high-speed rail. However, much of this funding has been squandered for other activities. About \$12 billion of this was aimed at intercity rail. This grant program is mostly allocated for Amtrak and other long-distance lines, but high-speed rail could submit to it. The availability of this funding has required the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to build a program for planning inner city passenger rails. This is a new program for the FRA, as they have traditionally been safety organizations for freight rail lines. Passing the High-Speed Rail Act is an example of how future funding may be funneled through an existing program, such as the FRA or another agency. This new program aims to ensure that passenger rail is not overlooked in the U.S. and that new corridors are planned for.

Pablo Peña, Citizen

A. Environmental approval

Question: Have the Dallas, Arlington, and Fort Worth stations received environmental approval?

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: The Dallas station is federally approved. For the Arlington and Fort Worth stations, we've worked with those cities over the last six years to identify suitable locations. The Arlington station will be located underground near IH30 and Baird Farm. It's underground because the interchanges of IH30 at SH 161, President George Bush Turnpike and SH 360 make it impossible to run a rail line above ground through such complex infrastructure. We intend to build the Fort Worth station underground between the current Fort Worth Central Station, which serves Amtrak, TEXRail and Trinity Railway Express, and the new Texas A&M campus, which is now being built. We need to identify the specific station locations and any environmental or social impacts associated with them. These stations will be identified through this process, much like the Dallas station was identified through the Houston-to-Dallas process.

B. NEPA process

Question: How far along is the NEPA process?

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: The official environmental process began on March 4, 2024. Our goal is to complete it in 12 months, which means we should be finished by early 2025. However, we've been working on this for years, with the intention of starting the first steps of the process before 2020. We did not initiate the actual process earlier because once you start it, you have 12 months to meet federal standards and complete it. We wanted to be sure we had done preliminary work, such as an alternatives analysis, before officially commencing the process.

Devon Skinner, Citizen

A. Project grading

Question: Can you go over the process of how the grading of the high-speed rail was determined? Was the natural grading of the ground influencing its speed or was there a more technical reason for how the route was graded?

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: The answer is essentially all of the above. The best route is a straight line from point A to point B, which is how we ended up on the IH 30 corridor. We aimed to stay on public right of way as much as possible to avoid impacts on privately held

land. Currently, 85 to 90 percent of the route is on public right of way. In terms of elevation, we needed to match the station heights from Houston to Dallas to provide a smooth, one-seat journey, resulting in no train changes at the Dallas station. Transfers in the train sector are known to diminish ridership, comparable to how consumers prefer direct flights at airports, which is why elevation in Dallas was needed. Dallas also benefits from natural grade as we move north from the already planned Texas Central high-speed rail station. We were unable to pass through Arlington due to interchange difficulties. In Fort Worth, we encountered issues with the downtown Mixmaster and Tower 55, where the Union Pacific and Burlington Northern mainlines intersect. We also wanted to be able to travel south from Fort Worth in the future, which necessitated a north-south station.

B. Autonomous transportation

Question: What would autonomous transportation look like in practice going from Arlington to the DFW airport? What are some examples of what that could look like?

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: We aim to utilize the latest automotive technology, such as autonomous vehicles and transport, to revolutionize transportation systems. Our approach is to create a flexible infrastructure that can adapt to technological advancements. By using autonomous vehicles on a simple roadway structure, we can ensure efficient transportation from point A to point B. These vehicles, which are available now, can accommodate anywhere from four people to small buses, offering a versatile and forward-thinking solution.

Phyllis Silver, Citizen

A. Brightline West project

Comment: I appreciated Brendon discussing the connectivity at Union Station with TRE, Amtrak, and DART's light rail. He also emphasized the importance of connectivity at airports. I hope TEXRail and the future Silver Line will be considered for high-speed rail connectivity, though this wasn't specifically mentioned. My brother in Las Vegas sent me information about the Brightline West project, which will connect Las Vegas to Southern California. Brendon briefly mentioned California, and this project has broken ground. I'm curious if NCTCOG is looking at best and worst practices from this project?

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: Yes, we have had conversations with the developers of Brightline West. Brendon and I met with them about six months ago to understand what they were doing and how. It's interesting their corridor will be largely in the IH 15 corridor, much like ours in the IH 30 corridor. They discovered, as we did, that being in public right of way is advantageous. They have received all their approvals and completed the NEPA process. Once they finalize their funding, they will be ready to start construction. Regarding connectivity to the airport, Brendon mentioned the proposed connection with DFW Airport. The RTC's policy ensures equal access to airports in the region. Currently, you can reach Love Field through DART and DFW Airport from the north via TEXRail. You can also get to DFW indirectly through the Trinity Railway Express, which stops at CentrePort station, with shuttles to the airport. We are planning the Silver Line connection into the airport, allowing access from the eastern part of the region. Airport access is crucial, and all high-speed rail developers we've talked to agree that a connection to DFW Airport is essential.

Gary Hennessy, Citizen

A. Partnering entities

Question: With respect to high-speed rail, are there any limitations to the number of entities that can be combined to create this rail throughout Texas? Is there a comprehensive evaluation of all transportation throughout North Central Texas showing how much can be saved on the DFW Airport expansion by building high-speed rail?

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: There hasn't been a statewide study conducted. However, there are plans for a joint economic study between the cities of Dallas, Arlington and Fort Worth regarding the currently planned high-speed rail. The focus of discussion seems to be on an impact study for either DFW or Love Field. Although the study has not yet begun, we have a good idea of the travel patterns, both within the State and nationally, which could facilitate such a study. High-speed rail offers an efficient alternative to short-haul aviation, such as Houston to Dallas, which was previously served by frequent flights. This allows airlines to focus on longer-haul flights while high-speed rail handles regional intercity trips. Urban areas can rely on light rail, commuter rail and bus systems for local transportation needs. The region's expansion, including DFW Airport's Terminal F and Love Field's potential additional services, indicates the area's significance not only as a destination but also as a transfer hub. While the region presents a promising market, the decision to build high-speed rail ultimately rests with entities that will determine if potential demand justifies the cost. This puts the initiative in a position for further evaluation and serious consideration by those responsible for its construction and operation.

New National Air Quality Standard: Fine Particulate Matter

David Yaqubian, Citizen

A. Data monitoring stations

Question: Why do we have very few data monitoring stations, and who is responsible for them?

Summary of response by Daniela Tower: Data monitoring stations are limited due to challenges in obtaining accurate parameters and finding suitable locations for monitoring results. The monitoring network is also extended, and establishing stations takes time. Prior to the EPA standard change, there was no need for more stations, especially in less densely populated areas. However, official monitoring stations are now being established. These stations meet EPA standards and the data from these stations provide a better overview of the situation. While some stations may not meet these standards, the data from these stations also help provide a better understanding of the situation. TCEQ mostly oversees the stations.

Pablo Peña, Citizen

A. Regional growth

Question: Is there a correlation between the region being in non-attainment and the growth that we've been seeing in the past 10 to 15 years, and could that impact the region being in non-attainment in the future?

Summary of response by Daniela Tower: Yes, growth implies more people must commute, which means more cars on the road and more building. However, there is still need for

development, and cars are much cleaner now. If that wasn't the case, we'd probably be in worse shape. In terms of the region's future non-attainment, I believe it will rely on how we handle things over time, what technology is doing and how much additional transportation is available.

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: Yes, additional population will certainly have an impact, but as Daniela indicated, it's not just about supply or demand from the population. It's also related to the transportation supply side, and the two must be balanced. That's why we're going through this process. As I mentioned before Daniela spoke, our long-range transportation plan must demonstrate that we can comply with those standards in the future. The plan includes the assumption that there will be an additional 3 to 4 million people in this region at that time.

Devon Skinner, Citizen

A. Non-attainment penalty fees

Question: Is there an administrative penalty from the EPA for falling out of compliance? Are there administrative penalties until we reach attainment? Is there a grace period? If so, what does that look like?

Summary of response by Daniela Tower: Yes, there will be consequences, but the timeframe and grace period are still uncertain. We are evaluating what can be done to address these issues and how they will impact the SIP. Many aspects remain unclear, but we will keep you updated.

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: TCEQ is responsible for the SIP, and our local actions feed into that plan. Our classification category affects how long we have to meet attainment deadlines. For ozone, we've been working on this for 30 years, with several deadlines passing. When we miss a deadline, we get reclassified and must take additional steps to ensure future compliance. It's misleading to say we're not compliant with ozone standards because we did meet the initial standards. However, over the years, the threshold has been lowered repeatedly. While this is frustrating, it's beneficial for public health as it keeps pressure on us to reduce harmful ozone-forming emissions. The same approach applies to particulate matter.

Phyllis Silver, Citizen

A. Wind transport

Question: How are wind and Sahara dust measured? When you're measuring particulate matter, how can you tell whether we're responsible or if it's air from another region?

Summary of response by Daniela Tower: NCTCOG is currently looking into data and seeking a database that collects information on special events, such as Saharan dust and wildfires, which can bring significant amounts of particulate matter into the region. We are gathering data to correlate high-emission days with special events and certain meteorological conditions. While we cannot directly measure the specific particles in the air, we can use data and correlations to determine if the particles were generated locally.

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: The process Daniela is referring to is called transport. We face the same issue with ozone during the summer when the winds in our region are primarily out of the south. Many ozone-forming components blow up from the Houston area into our region. There's a lot of national discussion about this issue, where someone needs to be

responsible, but the people affected are in the non-attainment area. So far, there is no good answer for how the nation is dealing with transport.

B. Particulate matter determination

Question: Can someone determine whether a particular particulate matter is from the desert or a wildfire? Can the actual particles be analyzed to identify what they are? Can it be determined if it's from car emissions, desert dust or something else?

Summary of response by Daniela Tower: In theory, the possibility exists, but in practice, it is highly complex and costly due to the extensive data collection and analysis required for elusive particles. This analysis is primarily conducted through correlating typical weather events rather than directly analyzing the particles, as direct analysis is too intricate and expensive to perform daily.

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: As you mentioned, we are aware when we exceed the standards and have anecdotal knowledge of environmental conditions locally, statewide, nationally and internationally. We understand from the best available science how long it takes for such events to occur. For example, with Sahara dust, one can visibly observe it outside. While we may not analyze individual particles, we can closely correlate these events with known occurrences.

Other

Ann Zadeh, Citizen

C. Data monitoring stations

Comment: I want to quickly acknowledge that we appreciate the update on the high-speed rail conversation. You've noted that there aren't as many as we would like, and we share that concern. We hope we can find a way to have a more robust monitoring system. During my time on city council, we talked about air pollution possibly decreasing during the pandemic, and we hoped to maintain that as things returned to normal. Clearly, we haven't achieved that. We appreciate the focus on other modes of transportation rather than just building more freeways. I will follow up with additional questions via public comment before the end of the comment period.

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: Thank you, and we look forward to receiving your comments and questions.

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

TRANSPORTATION

ONLINE PUBLIC INPUT OPPORTUNITY

MONDAY, JUNE 10 - TUESDAY, JULY 9, 2024

WHAT DO YOU THINK? TELL US.

Learn about transportation in the region and help set future priorities. The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) and North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), together serving as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth area, are seeking public input. Information will be posted online at publicinput.com/nctcogJune24 for public review and comment **Monday, June 10 - Tuesday, July 9, 2024**.

Modifications to the FY2024 and FY2025 Unified Planning Work Program

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for Regional Transportation Planning provides a summary of transportation and related air quality planning activities to be conducted in North Central Texas. Proposed modifications to the FY2024 and FY2025 UPWP will be posted below in the files tab near the bottom of the page for review and comment. More information: nctcog.org/upwp.

For special accommodations due to a disability or for language interpretation, contact Jackie Castillo at 817-695-9255 or jcastillo@nctcog.org at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. Reasonable accommodations will be made.

SUBMIT COMMENTS & QUESTIONS TO NCTCOG:

nctcogJune24@publicinput.com
publicinput.com/nctcogJune24
 Phone: 855-925-2801 (code: 6129)
 Fax: 817-640-3028
 P.O. Box 5888, Arlington, TX, 76005-5888

To request printed copies of the information, call 817-695-9255 or email jcastillo@nctcog.org.



RESOURCES & INFORMATION

Interactive Public Input: Map Your Experience:
nctcog.org/mapyourexperience

NCTCOG Spatial Data Cooperative Program:
nctcog.org/sdcp

Dallas-Fort Worth Air Quality Improvement Plan:
publicinput.com/dfwaqip

Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities:
dfwcleancities.org

Fort Worth climbs the list of most populous cities in US

BY JAIME MOORE-CARRILLO MAY 16, 2024 2:23 PM

Cowtown is still a boom town — and it may soon rank among the country's 10 largest cities.

Fort Worth last year became the 12th most populous city in the United States with 978,468 residents, climbing one spot in the charts, according to Census data released Thursday. It also experienced the second largest population swell in the country, absorbing 21,365 new residents (only a few hundred less than the largest grower, San Antonio). But Fort Worth's growth rate (2.2%) blew away state and national averages among big cities.

Panther City's population grew faster than Dallas (0.4%), Houston (0.5%), Austin (0.5%), and San Antonio (1.5%). Fort Worth has minted an average of roughly 18,500 new residents annually since 2013. If trends hold, the city will reach the million person threshold by 2026.

The number of new Texans jumped 1.6% last year; the nation's population, meanwhile, eked up 0.5%. Of the 15 cities that experienced the largest growth spurts, eight are in the Lone Star state, concentrated along the outskirts of its major metropolitan areas. The state's housing stock also mushroomed.

Builders constructed just over 260,000 new dwellings across Texas last year, roughly 17% of all new residences nationwide; Harris, Travis, and Collin counties recorded three of the country's five largest housing booms. Tarrant, adding 17,194 new homes, fell just outside the list, though its home construction rate (2.0%) was almost twice the national average.

<https://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/fort-worth/article288526124.html#storylink=cpy>

CITY OF ARLINGTON

COMMUNITY INVITED TO LIVE DEMONSTRATION MAY 8, 2024, OF CITY OF ARLINGTON'S MULTIMODAL DELIVERY PILOT PROJECT

By Susan Schrock, Office of Communications

April 30, 2024



The City of Arlington will host a Multimodal Delivery Showcase on May 8, 2024, to demonstrate autonomous ground robots and uncrewed aircraft systems that will be used to test the delivery of nonperishable food to Arlington residents through an innovative pilot project.

More information about the pilot project, which will run through 2025, will be shared at the public demonstration. The event is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. outside the Bob Duncan Center at Vandergriff Park, 2800 S. Center St. Vehicle demonstrations will be held throughout the event so participants are welcome to come and go.

The City's pilot program, designed to test the efficiency and scalability of using autonomous, electric delivery vehicles to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while serving residents in need, is funded with the help of a \$780,182 U.S. Department of Energy grant. The goal of this two-year study is to test and evaluate the use of no-emission or low-emission uncrewed aircraft and four-wheeled robots that are smaller than cars to deliver essential food items to individuals who are mobility challenged, historically disadvantaged, or lack a reliable means of transportation.

Arlington is partnering with Tarrant Area Food Bank, the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA), the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Coalition (hosted at the NCTCOG), Airspace Link, Aerialoop, and Clevon.

An estimated 300 boxes of food will be delivered to Tarrant Area Food Bank clients living in East Arlington during the study. These deliveries will be made by Aerialoop's ALT6-4 VTOL aircraft, a 6-foot-long, battery-powered aircraft that can carry nearly nine pounds, and Clevon's autonomous delivery robot, CLEVON 1, equipped with a spacious cargo bay that clients can unlock with a code to access their delivery. Airspace Link's AirHub® Portal will be used to provide the data and digital infrastructure needed for planning, decision-making, and operations, including detailed ground and air analysis that will help the delivery vehicle operators determine take-off, landing, and delivery routes. Routes will be developed to avoid flying over residential areas and high-traffic roadways, and onboard sensors will use data only for navigation purposes.

Anticipated benefits from the project include knowledge that could help scale similar delivery services to reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve overall efficiencies in delivery and transportation systems. Lessons learned from this project in Arlington will be shared widely to help other communities seeking similar benefits.

The City of Arlington was among 45 recipients nationwide selected by the Department of Energy's Vehicle Technologies Office competitive grant program, which provides funding to advance research, development, demonstration, and deployment of projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation sector. The total project cost is estimated at \$1.6 million, nearly half of which is grant funded. The required local match will come from contributions from all project partners through in-kind staff time and the use of equipment.

[Click here to read more.](#)

RACETRAC OPENS ITS FIRST ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGER IN DALLAS

Convenience-store chain plans to install total of 20 by 2025

By Hannah Hammond

April 30, 2024



Photograph courtesy of RaceTrac

RaceTrac opened one of five new direct current fast electric vehicle (EV) chargers Thursday in Dallas. This is part of the convenience-store chain's plans to install 20 new EV charging sites by the end of 2025 in the Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, market, [RaceTrac CEO Natalie Morhous has said](#).

RaceTrac now has three EV chargers open in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, each with two recharging spots, a company spokesperson told *CSP* Tuesday. Two more will open soon, with one scheduled to open in early May.

- *RaceTrac is [No. 17](#) on CSP's [2024 Top 40 Update](#) to the [2023 Top 202](#) ranking of U.S. c-store chains by store count. Watch for the full 2024 Top 202 ranking in the June issue of *CSP* magazine and in *CSP* Daily News.*

At the installation on Thursday, several local government representatives joined RaceTrac's EV leadership for a hands-on session to learn how the company is expanding the country's EV charging infrastructure within the rapidly growing c-store sector, RaceTrac said in a [LinkedIn post](#).

RaceTrac opened its first EV charging station at a c-store in Oxford, Alabama, [in October](#). It partnered with EV charging provider EnviroSpark for the installation.

“As pioneers and innovators in the transportation and fuel industry, we are embarking on a new journey to support the development of an electrified transportation system,” Max McBrayer, RaceTrac’s former CEO, said when the first charger was installed in Oxford. “As a fuel provider—no matter the type—RaceTrac will meet the evolving needs of its guests and America’s motorists by providing EV drivers with access to a robust and reliable refueling network for years to come.”

A record 1.2 million EVs were sold in 2023, accounting for 7.6% of the total U.S. vehicle market, according to Kelley Blue Book. Cox Automotive predicts that number [to grow to 10% in 2024](#).

RaceTrac, Atlanta, has about 580 [RaceTrac-branded c-stores](#) and more than 800 total including its RaceWay brand.

CLIMATE PLAN TO REDUCE AREA AIR POLLUTANTS IN TARRANT COUNTY

By Colby Farr, Miranda Jaimes

May 2, 2024



Traffic moves near the Tarrant County Courthouse on a March morning. Traffic and idling cars are some of the causes of pollutants that affect air quality in northeast Tarrant County. (Miranda Jaimes/Community Impact)

Residents in Keller, Roanoke and northeast Fort Worth could breathe cleaner air in about five years following the development of a new plan to reduce regional emissions.

The [North Central Texas Council of Governments](#) submitted its [Priority Climate Action Plan](#) to the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) on March 1, the first step in an effort to improve air quality throughout North Texas.

The priority plan is one piece of the Dallas-Fort Worth Air Quality Improvement Plan, a collaborative effort between the council's transportation department, and environment and development department, Senior Air Quality Planner Savana Nance said. The priority plan was created with support and collaboration from more than 30 local governments in the region, including those from Tarrant County and Fort Worth.

Alan Blaylock, Fort Worth District 10 council member, said the plan could spur more discussion

in local programs, such as constructing more transportation infrastructure and supporting alternative energy vehicles.

About the plan

Tarrant County Commissioner Gary Fickes, whose precinct includes Keller, Roanoke and northeast Fort Worth, signed a letter of support for the plan last year and said the county has access to more grant funding as part of this initiative.

He noted that poor air quality can cause restrictions to be placed on local construction projects, and it's in the county's best interest to try to improve its air quality.

"[Improving air quality] can really benefit us if we do it right," Fickes said.

The plan covers the next five years and has 42 actionable measures, Nance said.

If all measures from the plan are fully implemented, the region could see a reduction in ground-level ozone, which has been rising in North Texas for the last three years. Ground-level ozone is a harmful air pollutant and the main ingredient of smog, according to the EPA.

The plan addresses emissions and air quality improvement measures across five sectors.

- Transportation
- Solid waste management
- Agriculture, forestry and land use
- Energy
- Water, wastewater and watershed

A closer look

The plan's 42 measures include initiatives related to funding infrastructure for low-emission and electric vehicles, incentivizing commercial and industrial solar projects as well as promoting clean energy finance programs.

Despite improvements made over the past 20-30 years, North Texas is still not meeting the attainment standard for ground-level ozone set by the EPA, Nance said.

The region's population growth may have contributed to stalls in air quality improvement. Tarrant County's population increased more than 16% between 2010 and 2019, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

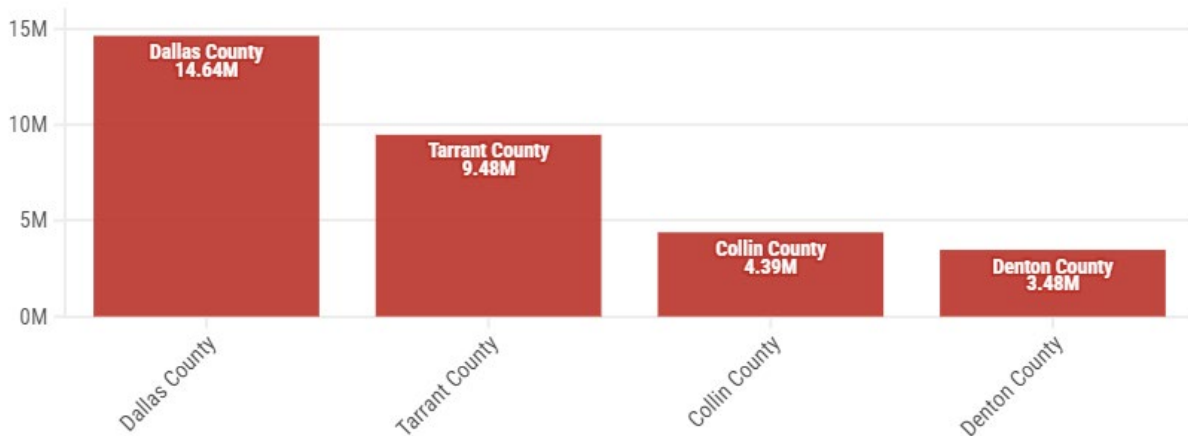
One result of being out of the attainment standard is that while most Texas residents will benefit from House Bill 3297 in 2025, which exempts drivers from getting their vehicle inspected, Tarrant County will continue to require this.

2019 road vehicle emissions

The North Central Texas Council of Governments used 2019 as its baseline year for emission estimates, since it was the most recent year the necessary data was available and represented how the region operated before disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Carbon dioxide equivalent emissions from vehicle road travel in the NCTCOG's 16-

county region were highest in Dallas County, followed by Tarrant County. Vehicle emissions are measured in carbon dioxide equivalent emissions in metric tons.

Vehicle emissions in metric tons



Source: North Central Texas Council of Governments/Community Impact

Zooming out

Tarrant County is among [10 counties](#) that do not meet the EPA's revised annual standard for fine particulate pollution. It was announced Feb. 7 that the standard for this type of pollution was lowered from 12 micrograms per cubic meter to 9 micrograms per cubic meter. Federal officials say this new standard is meant to better protect communities across the country. Tarrant County fell just outside this standard with 9.1 micrograms per cubic meter.

The 10 counties are:

- Bowie County
- Cameron County
- Dallas County
- El Paso County
- Harris County
- Hidalgo County
- Kleberg County
- Tarrant County
- Travis County
- Webb County

"This final air quality standard will save lives ... especially within America's most vulnerable and overburdened communities," EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan said in a news release.

A [lawsuit](#) from the Texas Attorney General's Office challenges these new standards, saying the new standards are not based on sound science and will impose economic harm on Texas.

Why it matters

Ten counties specifically in North Texas, including Tarrant, do not meet federal standards for ground-level ozone concentration, which can impact quality of life and respiratory health for North Texas residents.

To reach attainment, each North Texas monitor has to report less than 75 parts per billion in ozone concentration on a three-year average. The region's ozone average was reported at 81 parts per billion between 2021-23.

The Federal Clean Air Act can impose penalty fees on major sources of emissions in North Texas. Transportation and energy production make up a significant portion of emissions.

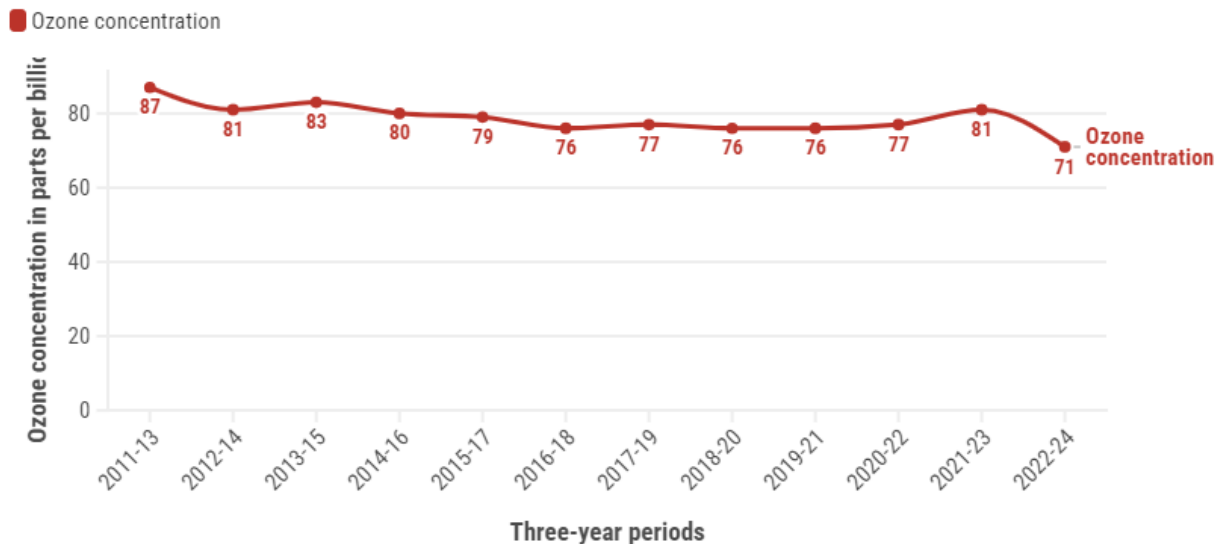
While regional officials develop strategies for better air, local officials are fighting a proposed project they say could reduce air quality in Fort Worth.

In [January](#) Fort Worth Mayor Mattie Parker and Blaylock sent a letter to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality opposing a proposed cement plant in northeast Fort Worth.

“The EPA gives some clear guidance on these chemicals specifically from concrete plants,” Blaylock said. “We know that there’s a causal relationship between these chemicals and these health issues.”

Ozone concentration trends in North Texas

North Texas has seen its ozone concentration average tick up during the most recent three-year measurement period. In order to reach attainment, each monitor in the region has to report less than 75 parts per billion in ozone concentration.



Source: North Central Texas Council of Governments/Community Impact • Note: Data for 2022-24 is not measured in a full three-year period.

What's next

With the five-year plan published, the council of governments will make every effort to collaborate with the region in implementing improvement measures, Nance said.

"We're going to need the buy-in from our local governments, businesses [and] residents to adopt that change," Nance said.

The council can apply for more grant funding to help implement measures from the plan. The association submitted a \$199 million grant request April 1 to the EPA. If awarded, the money would be used to implement 19 measures listed in the plan. These would support clean vehicle initiatives, improve bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and enhance regional transit services.

The EPA is expected to announce grant recipients in October, Nance said.

DEVELOPER PULLS APPLICATION TO BUILD LANDFILL NEAR LAKE WORTH FOLLOWING RESIDENT OUTCRY

By Haley Samsel

May 2, 2024



BAP Kennor once sought to turn a former quarry into a landfill to store and recycle demolition waste materials. The company rescinded its permit application on May 1, 2024. (Emily Wolf | Fort Worth Report)

After months of opposition from residents and Tarrant County officials, the company seeking to build [a new landfill near Lake Worth](#) rescinded its application for an environmental permit on May 1, according to a state database.

Tarrant County Commissioner Manny Ramirez celebrated the move Thursday, calling BAP Kennor LLC's decision a "tremendous victory" for his constituents living along Silver Creek Road, where the facility was planned.

"For the past six months, we have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to continue the fight to protect our Silver Creek community," Ramirez said [in a statement](#). "There is still much work ahead, but today's announcement is a promising step in the right direction."

Hundreds of residents turned out for a [December public meeting](#) hosted by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the agency responsible for permitting and regulating landfills in the state.

State Rep. Charlie Geren, who requested the meeting and met with residents to hear their concerns, joined Ramirez, Fort Worth City Council member Macy Hill and Mayor Mattie Parker in opposing the permit application. They cited concerns about the possibility of landfill waste contaminating nearby water sources and an increased amount of traffic congestion and street repairs on a two-lane road already taxed by rapid population growth.

Frank Pugsley, who represented BAP Kennor at the public meeting, told residents that the facility would be engineered to protect human health and the environment. He argued that the project would reduce the amount of material headed to landfills and decrease illegal dumping by giving companies another location to bring waste.

Representatives for BAP Kennor did not immediately respond to a request for comment.



Northwest Tarrant County residents line up to ask questions during a public meeting on BAP Kennor's landfill proposal on Silver Creek Road. Hundreds of people turned out for the Dec. 5, 2023, meeting at Brewer High School. (Haley Samsel | Fort Worth Report)

If the application had been approved by state officials, BAP Kennor would have built a recycling center to accept up to 450 tons of construction and demolition waste per day, including metals, woods, lumber, green waste, plastics and concrete.

Don Brewer was among the 50-plus residents who spoke out against the permit last December as a prominent advocate of the ["Save Silver Creek" campaign](#). While he's excited to see the company pull its application, Brewer is worried that BAP Kennor may pursue other options to build a landfill facility.

"I'm real happy and real cautiously optimistic," Brewer said.

The site at 3411 Silver Creek Road previously operated as a gravel quarry and landfill, though the landfill permit [became inactive in 1985](#). Last summer, company officials successfully transferred an existing municipal solid waste disposal permit from the land's previous owners to BAP Kennor.

That landfill permit is now active, as are stormwater and aggregate production permits, according to a state environmental commission database. BAP Kennor's rescinded application would have allowed the facility to process — separate, sort, shred, grind and bale — waste at the site.

"TCEQ did not remove the Type IV permit that says technically, right now, they can start hauling trash in there," Brewer said.

The only way to guarantee that BAP Kennor doesn't try to use its active permits or re-apply for a processing permit is to purchase the land, Brewer said. He and other residents have formed a new group, [the Lake Worth Conservancy](#), to rally neighbors around the cause of preserving open space in the lake's watershed, including BAP Kennor's property.

Preserving the property for parkland would take substantial federal, state or local dollars, Brewer said. He asks: If Congress could [give \\$1 million](#) in federal funds to Harold Simmons Park in Dallas, why not for Lake Worth?

"We're curious to see if we can find a way to get access to some more funds to help sweeten up the pot, to get them to walk away," Brewer said. "To me, that's what's going to be the final deal, when that property leaves their possession and becomes a county property. Because at that point in time, then it's a done deal. There's no way that (the permit) could ever be activated."

FORT WORTH WILL EXPLORE URBAN RAIL DEVELOPMENT LINKING CITY'S ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICTS

By Jaime Moore-Carrillo

May 2, 2024

The Fort Worth mayor's office Thursday morning unveiled a committee to "explore opportunities" for the development of urban rail in the city.

The Urban Rail Committee Supporting Economic Development & Tourism will begin meeting this summer through the end of 2024, according to a city press release. The group's inception signals a more serious commitment from Fort Worth leaders to fill a [gap in the city's transportation infrastructure](#).

"We know that Fort Worth remains one of the fastest-growing cities in America, and current trends show that in 2100 the Fort Worth-Dallas Metro region [will be the largest metro area](#) in the country," said Mayor Mattie Parker in a statement. "With that growth comes immense challenges and opportunities. I believe right now that we are well-poised for the opportunity to explore urban rail opportunities, particularly in supporting our growing economic development and tourism industries."

The committee will "determine if there is a likelihood to develop a fixed rail system designed to move people along the entertainment districts within Fort Worth" and weigh the fiscal and legislative tools needed to create and sustain the network.

Only around 5% of Fort Worth residents [use trains of any type to get around the city](#), according to the latest Fort Worth community survey. Experts often pin the low usage rate on low availability, itself a product of the city's car-centric layout and dispersed population.

Another issue is, paradoxically, space. Dallas [bought up dozens of miles of track to expand](#) DART, its sprawling light rail system that often inspires the envy of Fort Worth's more rail-friendly residents. Freight conglomerates like BNSF and Union Pacific [dominate much of Fort Worth's](#) existing tracks; the land to construct new ones is scarce, and the appetite to buy up more space uncertain.

The [return](#) of mass urban rail to Cowtown almost reached the station in 2010, when the Federal Transportation Administration awarded the city \$25 million to develop an electric streetcar system. The Fort Worth City Council, citing concerns about future costs, [ultimately derailed the plan](#).

Yet demographic and economic trends may breathe new life into the project, or some variation of it. Fort Worth's population is soaring. More people and diminishing space will, in theory, pack residents closer together, [a pillar of a sustainable \(and financially viable\)](#) public transit system.

The city will team with Trinity Metro, which operates commuter and fixed rail systems linking hot spots across Tarrant and Dallas counties, to evaluate different options and their potential.

"Trinity Metro is always striving to think ahead for what Fort Worth's transit needs will be into the future," said Trinity Metro CEO Rich Andreski in a statement. "We are glad to continue our collaborative work on this effort with City of Fort Worth, this time with a focus on exploring

solutions that support the dynamic economic development and tourism needs of a rapidly-growing Tarrant County.”

The organization is [planning to extend its TEXRail line into Fort Worth’s medical district](#) (it submitted a [drainage study](#) for the project in late April). It [opened its newest Trinity Railway Express stop](#) just outside Richland Hills two months earlier.

DALLAS' \$1.25 BILLION BOND PACKAGE FOR CITY UPGRADES APPROVED BY VOTERS

Bond measures get overwhelming support; city will begin projects next fiscal year

By Everton Bailey Jr. & Leah Waters
May 4, 2024

Dallas voters overwhelmingly passed a [\\$1.25 billion bond package Saturday](#), paving the way for upgrades to city streets, sidewalks, parks, storm drainage, libraries and other buildings and infrastructure over five years.

According to final unofficial results, all 10 propositions on the ballot were approved by voters with support ranging from 86% in favor of borrowing \$521.2 million for street and transportation improvements to 71% in favor of borrowing \$26.4 million for housing and neighborhood infrastructure. in Dallas County.

Why This Story Matters

Dallas voters voted Saturday on whether the city should issue bonds worth \$1.25 billion to address over 5,000 projects up for consideration in 10 propositions authorizing new road improvements, building repairs, parks spaces and storm drainage controls, among other needs.

The propositions enjoyed strong support among city residents in Dallas and Denton counties, but it was a slightly different story among Dallas voters in Collin County, where voters were mostly against propositions meant to improve storm drainage and flood drainage and for housing infrastructure upgrades, according to unofficial results.

The vast majority Dallas voters are in Dallas County.

Voters were asked to approve \$1.25 billion in general obligation bonds to fund hundreds of projects meant to improve the quality of life for residents and municipal government workers. The most popular bond measure in Dallas County was [Proposition A](#) to devote \$521 million for expansion, repairs and improvements to roads, alleys, bridges, traffic signals and other related projects. It had nearly 87% approval according to early returns.

Related: [Dallas' \\$1.25 billion bond program: City releases wish list of projects](#)

City officials have said they plan to start issuing bonds in the next fiscal year, which starts Oct. 1, and that street resurfacing projects likely will be the first ones tackled. The bonds will be repaid with revenue collected from city property taxes. City officials have said approval of the propositions won't increase the current tax rate.

As early results rolled in, attendees at an election night watch party at the top of Reunion Tower in downtown Dallas hugged one another after the polls closed. Dallas Mayor Eric Johnson arrived a little after 8 p.m., but several people left the party an hour later after declaring victory for the 10 propositions.

Johnson said he believed voter approval on Saturday was a clear signal residents wanted better streets, safer neighborhoods and more green spaces.

"We're a city of both dreamers but also do-ers. And we've become a city that the rest of America yearns for," the mayor said during a speech at the party. "And that's because we don't just aim to compete in Dallas. We actually play to win here."

Dallas City Council member Jesse Moreno said he was thrilled to see residents coming together to back broad initiatives throughout the city.

"Tonight's about unity," Moreno told *The Dallas Morning News*. "Tonight is about bringing people of all backgrounds, of all walks of life together and being one Dallas. It shows the commitment that we are doing things right at City Hall and that people want to continue that progress that we've had so far, in particular into our parks."

The bond propositions drew mixed reviews from some voters at the polls Saturday.

Jim and Esmer Wear were split on what propositions they supported after voting at the Samuel Grand Recreation Center.

Jim Wear, 74, said he voted in favor of all 10 proposals, saying he felt all were necessary for city improvements.

"There were some I was a little concerned about, like the one on economic development. It just seemed like it could turn into another case of the rich getting richer," he said. "But at the end of the day, I guess I'm an optimist and really hoping all of the money is put to good use."

Esmer Wear, 76, said she supported a portion of the propositions and voted against at least one of them.

"I voted for the ones on homelessness, arts and culture, libraries, parks, all things I believe are core issues that need to be addressed in the city," she said. She voted against the proposition related to streets and transportation projects, saying she wasn't sure how efficient the city would be with the funds.

"I see streets torn up or in poor condition all the time," she said. "It makes you wonder where the money goes."

South Oak Cliff resident Joe Bennett said he voted for every proposition except Proposition G, which covers economic development-related projects. He said he was concerned based on the way the ballot measure was written that it would lead to city initiatives and programs that could result in tax hikes.

"I don't want to support anything that increases my taxes," said Bennett, 71, after voting at the Kiest Park Recreation Center Saturday afternoon. He said his support for housing, parks and arts facilities drove him to support the other bond propositions.

Saturday's election was the latest chapter on a bumpy road that saw [city staff recommendations for bond money allocations clash with suggestions from a civilian board](#) appointed by council members. Council members were not being entirely unified on [when the election should happen](#) or what propositions voters should approve, and the city [canceled town halls meant to educate voters out of concern they could violate state law](#).

A political action committee called 2024 Dallas Bond Campaign, led by former U.S. Ambassador Jeanne Phillips and attorney Tim Powers, was created to publicly support the bond measures.

According to the group's campaign finance reports, it raised \$563,000 from [Feb. 28](#) to [April 24](#), spending more than \$477,000 over that period, and having almost \$136,000 on hand as of the end of April.

The committee is behind the ["Together, for Dallas" campaign](#) and reported the largest portion of their contributions, about 44%, went to local public relations and political consulting firm Allyn Media for advertising and consulting expenses. Donations included \$50,000 each from real estate investment and development firm Crow Holdings, the Dallas Regional Chamber and the Dallas Citizens Council, and \$25,000 each from Downtown Dallas Inc., real estate development company Matthews Southwest, development firm Hillwood, law firm Winstead, philanthropist Lyda Hill, and investor Darwin Deason.

There was no substantial campaign against the bond package, but some propositions faced public opposition.

Dallas City Council member Cara Mendelsohn urged voters to reject [Proposition C](#), which will provide \$52 million in upgrades to city storm drainage and flood protection related infrastructure, and [Proposition H](#), which is meant to set aside more than \$26 million for affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization initiatives. She said she [believes the city should find other ways to pay for those projects](#), such as separate bonds issued by the Dallas Housing Finance Corporation or Dallas Water Utilities.

All city voters who live in Collin and Denton counties are represented by Mendelsohn.

Some residents have opposed [Proposition F](#) that will allocate \$90 million for police and fire facility upgrades. The main point of contention is \$50 million of that tally is slated to go toward construction of a new police academy. Opponents believe the funds should go to initiatives that could improve policing in marginalized communities.

The May 4 election was the fourth time Dallas voters have weighed in on a city bond program over the last two decades. Voters approved the last three capital bond programs — \$1.35 billion in 2006, \$642 million in 2012 and \$1.05 billion in 2017.

Voters on Saturday also appeared to approve: [Proposition B](#) to put \$345 million for improving, expanding and building new parks and recreation facilities; [Proposition D](#) where more than \$43 million would go toward improving and building new libraries; [Proposition E](#) to set aside \$75 million in improvements and repairs to 15 city-owned arts and cultural facilities; [Proposition G](#) to devote \$72 million to city programs meant to support commercial, industrial and retail growth as well as incentives to lure more corporate investment into the city; [Proposition I](#), which would see \$19 million in initiatives meant to address homelessness; and [Proposition J](#) to take \$5 million to improve the former IBM building on 1000 Belleview Street, where the city plans to move its data center run by the Information and Technology Services Department.

At University Park United Methodist Church, Grace Anne Woodruff said her annoyance with driving over potholes on Dallas streets pushed her to vote for Proposition A for street and transportation-related projects. She called it a "no-brainer" that she supported Proposition B, which covers parks and recreation-related projects.

"I just think [parks are] important for children and for the greenery and the environment in Dallas," said Woodruff, 75, who has lived in North Texas since 1980. "Children need a place to play and go have a picnic."

[DATA CENTERS ARE DRAINING RESOURCES IN WATER-STRESSED COMMUNITIES](#)

A single data center can consume up to 5 million gallons of drinking water per day.

By Eric Olson, Anne Grau and Taylor Tipton
May 6, 2024



A single data center can consume up to 3 million to 5 million gallons of drinking water a day, enough to supply thousands of households or farms, write Eric Olson, Anne Grau and Taylor Tipton. (Nathan Hunsinger / Staff Photographer)

The rapid growth of the technology industry and the increasing reliance on cloud computing and artificial intelligence have led to a boom in the construction of data centers across the United States. Electric vehicles, wind and solar energy, and the smart grid are particularly reliant on data centers to optimize energy utilization. These facilities house thousands of servers that require constant cooling to prevent overheating and ensure optimal performance.

Unfortunately, many data centers rely on water-intensive cooling systems that consume millions of gallons of potable (“drinking”) water annually. [A single data center can consume up to 3 million to 5 million gallons of drinking water per day](#), enough to supply thousands of households or farms.

The increasing use and training of AI models has further exacerbated the water consumption challenges faced by data centers.

Machine learning, particularly deep learning models, requires significant computational power, which generates a lot of heat. As a result, data centers housing these machine-learning servers need even more cooling to maintain optimal performance and prevent overheating. [Graphics processing units](#), which are commonly used to accelerate machine learning workloads, are known for their high energy consumption and heat generation.

As the demand for machine learning applications grows across various industries, the need for data centers equipped to handle these workloads will continue to rise, putting additional pressure on local water resources. According to a report by [McKinsey & Company](#), data center electricity consumption in the United States is expected to increase from 17 gigawatts (GW) in 2022 to 35 GW by 2030, a 105% increase.

[Microsoft's 2022 Sustainability Report](#) showed that its total water consumption increased 34% from Fiscal Year 2021 to Fiscal Year 2022. In 2022, [Google's water consumption was 5.6 billion gallons](#) and projected to increase due to the generative AI revolution. Likewise, [Meta's water withdrawal](#) was approximately 1.29 billion gallons in 2022. However, the contractual price of the water used for each data center is not reported for any of the above-listed companies.

The drinking water used in data centers is often treated with chemicals to prevent corrosion and bacterial growth, rendering it unsuitable for human consumption or agricultural use. This means that not only are data centers consuming large quantities of drinking water, but they are also effectively removing it from the local water cycle.

Dry air reduces the risk of corrosion and electrical issues in the sensitive equipment in the data centers. The lack of humidity in water-stressed regions, such as the American Southwest, makes it an attractive location for data centers. This means that the regions in which it is "best" to locate a data center due to its arid environment has the highest marginal cost in terms of water consumption.

In the Phoenix area alone, there are [58 data centers](#). If each data center uses 3 million gallons of water per day for cooling, that equates to over 170 million gallons of drinking water used per day for cooling data centers. This massive consumption of drinking water for data center cooling puts a strain on the already fragile water supply and raises ethical questions about prioritizing the needs of tech giants over the basic needs of residents and agriculture.

The regulated nature of water pricing often creates a situation where tech companies, such as those operating data centers, pay the same amount for water regardless of their consumption levels. This is because water rates are often set by public authorities based on factors like the cost of water treatment, distribution and infrastructure maintenance, rather than being determined by supply and demand in a competitive market.

As a result, tech companies may be able to negotiate favorable water rates or take advantage of pricing structures that do not fully reflect the marginal cost of their water consumption. This can lead to a lack of incentives for these companies to conserve water or invest in more efficient cooling technologies, as they may not face the full economic cost of their water use.

Companies are often able to negotiate better rates for water than local residents. For example, in 2019, Google faced criticism for its plans to build [a massive data center in Mesa, Ariz.](#), after it was revealed that the company would pay a lower water rate than most residents. The deal, negotiated with the city, allowed Google to pay \$6.08 per 1,000 gallons of water, while residents

paid \$10.80 per 1,000 gallons. The arrangement sparked outrage among some residents who felt that the tech giant was receiving preferential treatment at the expense of the community.

Data centers are not a renewable resource. The average lifespan of a data center is approximately 10 to 15 years and needs continuous maintenance, just like a gas-powered vehicle. While the initial construction of a data center generates jobs, after its completion, [the number of employees needed at the center drops by approximately 90%](#).

Optimizing renewable power with AI and data centers at the expense of increasing water consumption is not a sustainable solution. Prioritizing one aspect of sustainability, such as reducing carbon emissions, while neglecting another crucial resource like water creates an illusion of sustainability. In reality, this can lead to unsustainable practices that can have severe unintended consequences for individuals and farmers, especially in water-stressed regions.

Eric Olson is an associate professor of finance and director of the Center for Energy Studies at the University of Tulsa. Anne Grau is the master in energy business program director at the University of Tulsa. Taylor Tipton is an undergraduate student in the energy management program at the University of Tulsa.

FORT WORTH APPROVES \$4.5M FOR NEW CROSSING GUARD AGREEMENT

By Miranda Jaimes

April 29, 2024



Fort Worth has entered into an agreement with a third-party company to provide crossing guard services. (Courtesy Adobe Stock)

[Fort Worth City Council](#) approved a three-year multimillion-dollar agreement with [All City Management Services Inc.](#) on April 23 for crossing guard services.

What's happening

The agreement will provide crossing guards in the morning and afternoon hours for both regular and summer school days, according to [meeting documents](#). The contract runs for an initial three year-term, with about \$4.5 million budgeted in the first year, about \$5.17 million for the second year and about \$5.82 million in the third year.

The background

Currently, the city's [Transportation and Public Works Department](#) covers:

- 14 school districts

- 166 schools with elementary and middle school-age children
- This makes a total of 314 intersections.

All 314 intersections will instead be provided coverage by All City Management Services Inc. This could increase to an estimated 374 intersections at the end of the three-year term, and 434 intersections by the fifth year, if the city chooses to renew the agreement, according to meeting documents.

Funding for the crossing guard services is provided by the city's [Crime Control and Prevention District](#) fund, which provides a half-cent sales tax to implement crime reduction strategies.

DALLAS MOVING FORWARD WITH PLAN TO ENTICE RESIDENTS TO SWITCH FROM GAS-POWERED LAWN TOOLS

City environmental officials hope to launch a \$750,000 program in 2025 to reimburse residents for switching to electric lawn mowers and other equipment.

By Everton Bailey Jr.
May 8, 2024



City of Dallas environmental officials hope to launch a program in 2025 that would offer residents a financial incentive to switch to electric-powered lawn equipment from gas-powered tools. The City Council could vote on whether to approve a plan as soon as June. (Elias Valverde II / Staff Photographer)

Dallas environmental officials are considering a new program that would [reimburse residents who switch from gas-powered lawn mowers, leaf blowers and other landscaping tools to battery or electric-powered equipment.](#)

The Dallas City Council could vote as early as June on whether to approve the framework of a financial incentive program. The city's office of Environmental Quality and Sustainability is still determining whether the program will provide discounts, vouchers, or a mail-in rebate that would require proof of buying non-gasoline fueled equipment in order to receive a reimbursement.

"This program aligns with the city's commitment to reduce our carbon footprint," Paul White II, the department's assistant director told City Council members during a committee meeting on Monday. "When compared to electric equipment, the gasoline-powered equipment emits high levels of pollutants that contribute to air quality issues, such as particulate matter and

greenhouse gases. So transitioning to electric alternatives benefits the health of the community by reducing emissions that could eventually lead to respiratory issues.”

Carlos Evans, the department’s director, told council members who are on the Parks, Trails and the Environment committee that the program is estimated to give reimbursements to 3,500 single-family households and that plans are in the works to consider expanding the program to businesses and residents who live in apartments. The [money comes from \\$750,000 the City Council approved in this year’s budget](#) for a lawn equipment transition program.

The city is turning to the rebate because a new state law prohibits cities from restricting the use of an engine based on the type of fuel it uses. Rebate amounts could range from \$50 each for leaf blowers, trimmers, edgers, and chainsaws; \$100 for push lawn mowers, and \$200 for riding mowers. There could be \$25 offered for battery replacements. Department officials said they are exploring whether the city can get any federal funding to support the program in the future.

The city estimates it could cost more than \$24 million if all of Dallas’ single-family households with gas equipment wanted to convert, including more than \$9 million for residents who just want to switch their lawn mowers. The city estimates 47% of the city’s more than 200,000 single-family households have gas-powered lawn mowers.

Council member Chad West said he would support any rebate method that would offer some kind of financial incentive to residents and businesses.

“If we ever get to the point where it’s more of the stick versus the carrot, I think it’s gonna take a lot more conversations because you’ve got to make sure you’re not harming folks during the transition,” he said.

Ortiz said there are more than 2,100 registered landscaping businesses in the Dallas area.

If the City Council approves plans for the program to move forward, the city would try to partner with retail stores for the program, finalize an application process, select vendors for the program, and roll out a public campaign to inform residents about the program all before the end of the year, according to the department officials.

The program would start sometime in 2025.

The program is the latest version of an [initial city plan that called for outlawing gas-powered lawn mowers and other equipment](#) due to air pollution and noise concerns. That proposal was [scrapped after state legislators passed a law last year](#) that blocks cities from restricting the use, sale or lease of an engine based on its fuel source. Dallas [has been exploring restricting the use of at least gas-powered leaf blowers since 2019](#).

Related:[Dallas-Fort Worth makes top 25 most ozone-polluted metro areas, report says](#)

“Originally we had plans to ban gas-powered lawn equipment, but after Senate Bill 1017, we cannot do that anymore,” White said on Monday.

Dallas in May 2020 adopted its [Comprehensive Environmental and Climate Action Plan](#), which is a citywide set of strategies meant to help reduce emissions and address environmental issues. Among the goals of the plan are making the city carbon-neutral by 2050 and cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 43% by 2030.

Freddie Ortiz, the department's environmental coordinator, said the city is in the midst of phasing out city-owned gas-fueled landscaping equipment, with a goal of fully switching over by 2027.

City officials in 2022 estimated it would cost \$6.5 million to fully convert more than 5,400 pieces of gas-powered, city owned-equipment to electric and battery powered. The Park and Recreation Department had transitioned 5% of their equipment to electric and the Aviation Department was at 38%, Ortiz said Monday.

"Some of the challenges of transition includes budget shortfalls, needed infrastructure upgrades to increase electrical capacity to power all the battery chargers needed, battery technology, and power parity between gas powered and electric powered equipment," he said.

[A study released last fall](#) found Dallas County ranked in the top 10 of 100 counties nationwide for carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxide, fine particulate, and volatile organic compound emissions from gasoline-powered lawn and garden equipment in 2020.

The [report from three environmental groups](#) said Dallas County ranked 5th in 2020 with 245 tons of fine particulate emissions, which the study estimated was the equivalent amount of pollution produced by more than 2.6 million cars in one year.

UT ARLINGTON COMPLETES \$2.5M PROJECT TO RENOVATE BRIDGES OVER COOPER STREET

By Dang Le and Olla Mokhtar

May 7, 2024



UTA's renovated bridges are ready for use April 24, 2024, on Cooper Street. The bridges have the UTA logo and the horses — the university's spirit animal — on the exterior traffic-facing signs. (Camilo Diaz | Fort Worth Report)

The University of Texas at Arlington's north and south bridges, which span Cooper Street to connect two sides of the campus, are seen by thousands of drivers every day. But many drivers wouldn't know they're passing by one of Texas' largest universities.

For years, the university planned to change that.

Now, the bridges have the UTA logo and horses — the university's spirit animal — on the exterior traffic-facing signs. The \$2.5 million renovation project is a part of the [UTA by 2030 strategic plan](#) to redefine the university's community impact.

"The updated imagery on our bridges creates a welcoming gateway to our campus," university President Jennifer Cowley said in an email statement. "My hope is that the bridges serve as a landmark, so that people know they're driving through one of the largest and most impactful universities in Texas."

The university announced in January 2023 the plan to renovate the north and south bridges, which arch high over six lanes of moving traffic along Cooper Street.

In 2020, the city's principal planner estimated some sections on [Cooper Street saw about 85,000 vehicles a day](#).

The bridges, completed in 1990, had become a health hazard because of lead-based paint on the panels and didn't serve their purposes as potential welcoming signs for UTA, said Paul Hughey, assistant director of institutional instruction.

In addition to removing the paint, the renovation included replacing masonry surrounding the bridges and the under-decking. Crews also stripped the bridges' panels and replaced them with more modern pieces.

New roofing was added, and the university replaced lamps and lighting for pedestrian safety with LEDs for sustainability.

UTA is considering adding lighting to the bridges to highlight them more at night, Hughey said.

To complete the project, UTA closed one lane in both directions of Cooper Street from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m.

"This is a very important project for administration," Hughey said. "Our branding is critical to the institution."

The project's development also saw involvement from students in the College of Architecture, Planning and Public Affairs. Last year, a group of five students won a competition seeking [design ideas for renovating the bridges](#).

As part of the winning prize, students joined the university in interviewing and selecting the contractor that would bring the bridge renovations to life. Fort Worth-based construction company SpawGlass was picked for the job.

"We also thought the bridge redesign would provide our students in the College of Architecture, Planning and Public Affairs with real-world experience — from design to project management," Cowley said.

The best part about winning was being a part of those conversations, graduate student Patricia Cerda said.

"The facilities department was so inclusive of us and let us kind of speak our mind in those spaces when they didn't have to be so welcoming," Cerda said.

However, the vision is bigger for Cerda and her team, which won the competition with a design that [constructs a deck over Cooper Street](#) that holds green space, social spaces and paths for pedestrians — similar to Dallas' Klyde Warren Park.

While the budget didn't allow UTA to realize the team's design, Cerda said she thinks the new project still provides a different experience for those using or viewing the bridges.

DALLAS WILL TAKE LOOK AT DANGEROUS DOWNTOWN THOROUGHFARE

Cesar Chavez Boulevard connects U.S. 75 and Interstate 30, but also crosses dense residential areas.

By Amber Gaudet
May 8, 2024



A study of Cesar Chavez Boulevard will begin in June following a high number of deadly crashes.(2016 File Photo / Ashley Landis)

A dangerous road that runs through downtown Dallas will get a second look from the city following [a number of crashes](#).

The Dallas City Council on Wednesday approved a traffic corridor study for the section of Cesar Chavez Boulevard from U.S. 75 to Interstate 30 to begin next month. The road, which is as wide as nine lanes in some sections, is the site of a [disproportionate number of fatal and severe crashes](#). Dallas will commit nearly \$300,000 in pandemic recovery funds to the project, which will assess traffic safety and pedestrian access.

Those funds will also cover improvements to signals at the intersections of Cesar Chavez Boulevard at Canton Street and Cesar Chavez Boulevard at Marilla Street.

Related:[Dallas gets \\$21.8 million to improve safety on dangerous stretch of road in South Dallas](#)

Residents have been sounding the alarm about Cesar Chavez for more than a year. The road carries thousands of drivers through the East Quarter and Farmers Market districts, areas that have evolved into residential hotspots over the past decade. The street's proximity to the interstates and highways that encircle downtown means motorists often drive fast, and residents say the wide road design encourages that.

"They've shared concerns about how the neighborhood's changed over time, but the road hasn't," said Evan Sheets, vice president of planning and policy at Downtown Dallas Inc.

Cesar Chavez is part of the Vision Zero High Injury Network — a network of roads identified as being particularly deadly. [Vision Zero is the city's goal](#) to eliminate traffic fatalities and reduce serious injuries by half by 2030. Roads with a higher number of traffic deaths are prioritized for engineering safety evaluations as part of the plan.

Related: [Dallas faces 'major challenge' in reducing traffic deaths, official tells City Council](#)

"This is a thoroughfare that has weekly accidents, I'm sure we've all passed by those," City Council member Jesse Moreno told the council Wednesday. "What I'm really excited about is it's going to be looking at traffic, but more importantly pedestrian volumes on how we redesign the street with the possibility around routes as well."

The city has already instituted short-term measures on Cesar Chavez like installing rumble strips to calm traffic, reducing lanes with cones when necessary and working with the Dallas Police Department to increase enforcement, Sheets said, but a long-term solution is needed.

"Ultimately, the [I-30 reconstruction project](#) is going to change the nature of that segment of street and I think any permanent changes need to be looked at within that scope, and also with changes to I-345 reconstruction and all the other projects going on," Sheets said. "So that's really trying to take into account what the future will look like and what the transportation loads on that corridor look like. And then ultimately designing a road diet for the section near the townhomes that meets the needs of the street and addresses the concerns of the residents there."

The study is expected to be completed in March 2025.

DRONE AND AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE FOOD BANK DELIVERIES LIFT OFF IN ARLINGTON

By Haley Samsel



Arlington Mayor Jim Ross assisted with piloting an Aerialoop delivery drone May 8, 2024, at the Bob Duncan Center at Vandergriff Park. The event kicked off a new pilot program for food bank deliveries in east Arlington. (Camilo Diaz | Fort Worth Report)

High wind speeds couldn't keep Arlington's new food delivery drones — or the city's ambitions to become a [transportation innovation hub](#) — from taking off Wednesday.

Standing next to a four-wheeled electric delivery robot and a 6-foot-long drone, Arlington Mayor Jim Ross celebrated the launch of [a new pilot program](#) that will bring Tarrant Area Food Bank packages to clients in east Arlington during the next year.

“Arlington continues to lead the wave in innovative approaches to transportation of people and goods so we can improve access and mobility for all of our residents,” Ross said. “This is cool stuff, and I love being in a city that likes to find the cool stuff to do. And this is cool stuff that benefits our residents who are in most need of getting products to their house and getting around our community.”

Using nearly \$800,000 in federal grant funding, city and food bank staff are working with Estonian self-driving [vehicle manufacturer Clevo](#), drone delivery company Aerialoop and drone software provider Airspace Link to test whether autonomous electric vehicles can be used to

deliver fresh food essentials to residents. Clevon's U.S. operations [headquarters are based](#) out of north Fort Worth's Alliance Airport.

The University of Texas at Arlington and North Central Texas Council of Governments are also partners on the project, which will cost about \$1.6 million in total.



A CLEVON 1 autonomous delivery vehicle makes its way around the Bob Duncan Center at Vandergriff Park on May 8, 2024. (Camilo Diaz | Fort Worth Report)

Starting in September, officials expect to deliver 300 boxes of food with Clevon's delivery robot, capable of driving up to 20 mph and holding six packages, and Aerialoop's ALT6-4 VTOL Delivery Drone, which can carry almost 9 pounds.

People tend to look at urban drone delivery as happening 10 years down the line, said Santiago Barrera, Aerialoop's chief operating officer.

"I like to start my conversations by saying: 'The future is today,'" Barrera said. "Everybody in this room, all of us, we're going to look back on this and say: 'We were there. We were at the center of where things started.'"

Arlington was among 45 grant recipients selected by the U.S. Department of Energy to conduct research that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions in transportation. Transportation is one of the largest sources of emissions such as carbon dioxide, which traps heat in the atmosphere and contributes to global warming, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Partners chose to try out deliveries in east Arlington because of the high number of existing food bank clients there, city transportation planning and programming manager Ann Foss previously [told the Report](#).

Stephen Raeside, the food bank's chief external affairs officer, said the project is spotlighting a serious problem in the city of almost 400,000. One in four Arlington children have reported being hungry in the last year, as have one in every six adults.

Arlington officials stepped up to the challenge of feeding hungry families during the COVID-19 pandemic by organizing massive [food distribution events at AT&T Stadium](#), Raeside said. The pandemic also forced the food bank to address what Raeside calls "last mile delivery," which ensures that people with disabilities or without reliable transportation can get necessary food items to their homes.

"We had a population of thousands that was stuck at home, so they could watch on TV tens of thousands of cars at AT&T Stadium, but they could not get there," he said. "We spent a lot of time exploring those last mile options, and that's what makes this project so exciting."

Along with showcasing technology at two May 8 events, Arlington officials are also asking residents to share opinions on the use of drones and delivery robots through [an online survey](#).



Aerialoop engineering manager José Barzallo, left, assists Arlington Mayor Jim Ross as he flies a drone May 8, 2024, at the Bob Duncan Center at Vandergriff Park. (Camilo Diaz | Fort Worth Report)

After conducting delivery demos this fall and next spring, project partners will produce a final report to the federal government. The findings will include a cost-benefit analysis, community reactions and the estimated reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from using electric delivery.

The lessons learned will be shared widely with other cities interested in rolling out similar delivery methods, Ross said.

Michael Morris, transportation director for the North Central Texas Council of Governments, said the project is not only about emissions goals or technology innovation. It's about improving the quality of life for people in need.

"You got the best and the brightest within the university to enhance the technology, and you got the members of the community that remind us about our obligation as humans to ... develop solutions for all of our residents," Morris said. "The energy efficiency and the air quality is just a huge bonus."



*Aerialloop's ALT6-4 VTOL Delivery Drone is 6 feet long, battery powered and capable of carrying almost 9 pounds.
(Camilo Diaz | Fort Worth Report)*

FEDERAL GRANT COULD HELP FUND 50 ELECTRIC BUSES FOR THE 2026 WORLD CUP IN NORTH TEXAS

The whole world will be watching 2026 FIFA World Cup matches broadcast live from AT&T Stadium. North Texas leaders want as many fans as possible to get to the events in an eco-friendly way, and aim to snag a \$52.6 million Federal Transit Administration grant to make it happen.

By Dabid Seeley
May 8, 2024



Electric DART Proterra bus turns onto Main Street in Downtown Dallas. [Video still: Proterra]

During the 2026 FIFA World Cup, AT&T Stadium in Arlington will be the site of [more World Cup matches than any of the other 15 host venues](#) in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. That means tons of fans needing rides to nine different matches, with a global audience watching.

So we're gonna need a lot of buses. And with the whole world watching—especially for one of the all-important semifinal matches—making as many buses as eco-friendly as possible is on the minds of leaders across the region.

Seeking \$52.6M from the Federal Transit Administration

The North Central Texas Council of Governments' Regional Transportation Council voted in April to apply for a federal grant that would help fund 59 electric buses for the 2026 World Cup and Trinity Metro.

The application calls for \$52.6 million to be spent to buy 50 electric buses for the World Cup and nine buses for Trinity Metro, along with electric charging stations, according to NCTCOG.

The funding is being made available through the Federal Transit Administration's Low or No Emission and Bus/Bus Facilities Grant. Awards are expected to be announced by the FTA in July.

Trinity Metro would supply around \$2.8 million as a local match for its buses and related infrastructure, with 5.9 million transportation development credits used to supplement the local match, NCTCOG said.

Buses would later be transitioned into public transportation fleets

Once the World Cup is over, buses funded through the grant would be transitioned to North Texas' public transportation authorities to replace older buses in their fleets, NCTCOG said.

DART received a \$103M Federal Transit Administration grant in 2023

These wouldn't be the first federal funds flowing to North Texas to make bus fleets more carbon-friendly.

In July 2023, Colin Allred (TX-32), a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, announced that Dallas Area Rapid Transit would receive [a \\$103 million Federal Transit Administration grant](#) to help modernize its bus fleet with low or no-emission buses.

The new buses were slated to replace about 186 in operation at that time.

In March 2023, DART's [first long-range electric bus began regular service](#), with an almost 300-mile range—longer than many private EVs buzzing around Dallas streets.

The 40-foot-long Proterra ZX5 Max (seen above) achieves that range by having six lithium-ion battery packs. Four are mounted under the bus, and two are mounted on the roof. Each battery pack stores 112.5 kWh of charge, for a total of 675 kWh.

NTXIA AND NCTCOG PARTNER TO RE-LAUNCH "INTERNET FOR ALL" COALITION AS INTERNET FOR NORTH TEXAS TO EXPAND INTERNET ACCESS ACROSS NORTH TEXAS REGION

By NTXIA

DALLAS, May 9, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- North Texas Innovation Alliance, a 501(c)3 regional consortium of over 40 municipalities, agencies, corporations and academic institutions across North Texas working to create the most connected, smart and resilient region in the country, has announced the re-launch of the "Internet for North Texas Coalition" (I4NTX). In partnership with the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), this coalition represents a collaborative effort across North Texas to prioritize broadband infrastructure and access, supporting digital equity for all residents.

"The I4NTX Coalition aims to revive the intent of Operation Connectivity and work with cross-sector teams to bring broadband access to more households throughout North Texas, leveraging the established coalition built by the NTXIA," said Jennifer Sanders, Executive Director of NTXIA. "We are honored to lead this effort and continue to grow the momentum in creating a digitally equitable future. With the support and guidance of our public sector partners, and subject matter expertise from the private sector, we are setting a strong foundation for sustainable digital growth and accessibility in the region."

NTXIA, together with the NCTCOG and members of the Texas Governor's Broadband Council, will spearhead this initiative, building on the work of the Dallas-focused Internet for All Coalition while expanding efforts to the regional level. Originally launched in 2020 with the establishment of Operation Connectivity, the Internet for All Coalition illustrated disparities in broadband access at the school district and neighborhood level, which set the ambitious target of connecting every K-16 student to high-speed broadband at home.

"On April 11th, 2024, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) for North Texas took a major step in approving NCTCOG's innovative broadband as transportation program. The program not only recognizes internet access as a crucial transportation mode, but it also establishes a robust framework for promoting widespread digital inclusivity across the North Texas region," said Connor Sadro, NCTCOG. "By declaring broadband a mode of transportation, we are not just expanding infrastructure; we are enhancing educational outcomes, economic opportunities, access to healthcare and quality of life improvements for residents impacted most by the digital divide."

The I4NTX coalition will engage public and academic entities across the region to address key elements and challenges of broadband efforts, including data, policy, infrastructure and equitable access. The coalition will also lead a subcommittee of 20-30 public sector practitioners that will advise elected officials from the Regional Transportation Council to form a legislative program to address regional digital needs with the Texas legislature. It will also encourage local municipalities to designate broadband technical leads and share best practices for achieving universal broadband access.

"I4NTX is a visionary step towards transforming how we understand and implement infrastructure for widespread connectivity," said Matt Yeager, a digital equity and connectivity

advocate and member of the Texas Governor's Broadband Development Council. "Broadband is as crucial as roads and bridges in today's world and ensuring that every resident has broadband access is fundamental to our region's growth and prosperity. As a founding member of the Operation Connectivity initiative in 2020, this is the right time to relaunch and expand the coalition's efforts, led by NTXIA."

Find out more about NTXIA and the I4NTX Coalition here: <https://ntxia.org/internet-for-north-texas>.

About the North Texas Innovation Alliance

The North Texas Innovation Alliance (NTXIA) is a 501(c)3 consortium of key cross-sector stakeholders working to develop and implement a smart region strategy for North Texas. The NTXIA is building the most connected, smart and resilient region in the country – bringing together government entities on all levels, transit agencies, utilities/infrastructure, public safety, educational institutions and some of the world's top technology developers in the private sector to pave the way for a brighter tomorrow. The organization's mission is to break down silos and drive the collaborative use of data, technology and community to address the most pressing topics and create solutions that will improve quality of life, drive inclusive economic development and promote resource efficiency. For more information, please visit www.NTXIA.org, or follow [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

SOURCE North Texas Innovation Alliance (NTXIA)

NBCDFW

TOWN HALL ON DANGEROUS STRETCH OF LOOP 12 GETS SOME ANSWERS FROM ROAD PLANNERS

State Senator Royce West, D - Dallas, held a town hall Thursday so people know more about the next steps for TxDOT, DART, and the City of Dallas

By Phil Prazan
May 9, 2024



The [NBC 5 investigative team](#) has detailed dangerous Dallas roadways for months. Thursday, transportation planners gave an update at a town hall organized by a state senator.

Loop 12 stands as one of the most treacherous stretches of road. A dozen stretches of Loop 12 were identified as among the worst locations for traffic deaths and serious injuries in the city of Dallas.

In the Dr. Frederick D. Todd Middle School auditorium Thursday night, road officials gave some answers. The school sits along Ledbetter Drive, a dangerous section of Loop 12. The road was built in the 1950s as a freeway near the outskirts of Dallas according to Dallas District Engineer for the Texas Department of Transportation Ceason Clemons.

Clemons gave a presentation on the situation along Loop 12 and their next steps along with "Gus" Khankarli from the City of Dallas Transportation Department and Michael Morris from the North Central Texas Council Of Governments.

Around thirty people who live nearby came to voice their concerns.

"A lot of African American, a lot of poor people live right here within this corridor. OK. So I think it's been neglected," said Anthony Peterson, who lives along Loop 12. "You're the experts. You

guys make the final decisions and you make the big dollars. We expect you guys to make these hard decisions and get it right.”

In the past year, drivers killed five pedestrians in crashes along a one-mile stretch according to TxDOT data. Two more pedestrians were seriously injured in the past two months.



Dallas has some of the most dangerous roads in the country. Loop 12 is one of the most treacherous. Transportation planners working on a safety overhaul held a meeting Thursday evening. NBC 5's Evan Anderson has the details.

A 2022 study from the City of Dallas found the 12 worst sections of road were all on Loop 12. TxDOT crash data notes 479 serious injury crashes and 105 deadly crashes on Loop 12 in the past five years. The Loop circles the city and goes by many names on different sides of town. East of downtown it's Buckner Boulevard. North of Love Field it's known as Northwest Highway. It's Walton Walker Boulevard going South through Irving. In Southern Dallas it's Ledbetter Drive.

Arthur Fleming's sister was killed in an accident where Ledbetter turns into Great Trinity Forest. Betty Sue Fleming was 77 when she died along the 2800 block of Ledbetter Drive. She was hit while walking across the street to the store. She did not cross at a cross walk. Arthur Fleming has tried to grab the attention of city planners for months.

Within a mile of where Betty Sue died, 11 other pedestrians were killed over the past decade.

“Y'all talking past each other. And again, Vision Zero has been going on for five years so I'm just trying to figure out what y'all been doing for five years, just kind of pointing at each other,” said Fleming.

TxDOT district engineer Clemons gave a presentation where she said the conditions in Loop 12 are seen in other parts of the state. There hasn't been a single day since November 7th, 2000 where someone hasn't died on Texas roads, more than 88,000 people have died in crashes. One out of five are pedestrians, she said.

"These are stats that we're not proud of," said Clemons.

Clemons said those numbers have trended downward in the past few years but basic things like not wearing seatbelts, distracted driving and speeding cause thousands of crashes a year.

Speed, she said, is among the chief factors for Loop 12.

TxDOT has begun building sidewalks, higher visibility cross walks, and adding traffic signals said Clemons. Projects in the near future are between Webb Chapel to Starlight and Jim Miller to 175, she said. More lighting is "currently under design," she said.

During the question and answer portion of the event, Clemons from TxDOT said they're in the middle of a speed study determining if they need to lower the speed limit. They aim to work with city and regional officials to put in more traffic signals in the next twelve to eighteen months.

"That's why we're working with Gus. Maybe a pedestrian signal doesn't make sense. Maybe we got to put a full signal," said Clemons, mentioning "Gus" Khankarli from the City of Dallas.

Clemons and Khankarli told the crowd they are reviewing bus routes with DART to consolidate or change bus stop locations so people don't jay walk to get to a bus stop.

"Engineering alone won't be able to address it. Enforcement alone won't address it. Education alone will not address it. It's a multi-pronged approach that we're taking," said Khankarli.

Two years ago, Dallas's Vision Zero safety plan names Ledbetter as one of the city's top five locations for pedestrian deaths and serious injuries.

The goal is to turn what was once a freeway into more of a city thoroughfare with more, safer, areas for people to walk and cross, said Clemons. That long-term project will be lengthy and they will be coming back for public input events in the months and years ahead.

Senator Royce West, D - Dallas, organized the town hall Thursday and plans on getting the same group together in the Fall for another update. By then, the planners told the crowd they hoped some new safety measures would be finished or at least further along the process. He sits as Vice Chair of the Transportation Committee in the Texas Senate and is on the Senate Finance Committee so he directly oversees the budget and policy of TxDOT.

Sen. West said he will push the transportation planners for results and, "make sure we have a timetable to come up with recommendations for dealing with this issue."

Hans-Michael Ruthe from DART was listed on the schedule to participate in the town hall but did not show up.

HOW FORWARD DALLAS MAY AFFECT THE FUTURE OF DALLAS NEIGHBORHOODS

The ForwardDallas plan is being discussed at city plan commission meetings and town halls. Some worry about what the plan might change.

By Jacob Vaughn
May 10, 2024

Anga Sanders lives in Oak Cliff, where she's owned a home for some 44 years. She's not a Dallas native, but she has called the city home for decades. She lives near Justin F. Kimball High School in a neighborhood made up of mid-century modern homes. She said it's a stable neighborhood and a stable community.

She calls southern Dallas the most topographically appealing part of the city. "It's a beautiful area that, if [ForwardDallas](#) passes, may not be so pretty after all," she said.

ForwardDallas, the city's comprehensive land use plan, has many people hopeful for the future of the city. Meanwhile, likely just as many people are up in arms about what that future could look like for single-family neighborhoods. Sanders said she sometimes feels bad for city staff working on the plan "because they're more or less caught between the devil and the deep blue sea here."

"That job is difficult. I get that," she said. "But we made a covenant with the city when we bought our homes where we bought them. We bought them in single-family neighborhoods. That was the deal that we made. It's not fair to come back and try to change all of that. And, yes, we are rebelling against it."

The city adopted ForwardDallas in 2006 to establish guidelines for how public and private land should be used and what Dallas should look like in the future. These plans are generally updated about every 10 years, but now, 18 years later, the update is overdue. The plan is currently with the city plan commission and might not be ready for City Council members' eyes until this fall.

"It is a vision or a guide for how the city of Dallas should grow over the next 10 to 20 years, and it's a way for the community to get involved in that discussion," Andrea Gilles, the interim director of Dallas' planning and urban development department, told the *Observer* in March. "ForwardDallas looks specifically at future land use, and how that is developed or looked at for the long-range vision for Dallas."

There are five overarching themes in the plan: environmental justice and sustainability; transit-oriented development and connectivity; housing choice and access; economic development and revitalization; and community and urban design.

The city has changed a lot since that first iteration of ForwardDallas was adopted. There has been a lot of growth in Dallas since then, and the revised plan intends to help accommodate that growth. According to [usafacts.org](#), Dallas County grew 9.6% between 2010 and 2022, from 2.4 million to 2.6 million people.

Patrick Blaydes, chief planner for the ForwardDallas project team, told the *Observer* in March, “I think a lot of what ForwardDallas has looked at is ‘OK, how has the market changed and how do we need to be intentional about what that change looks like?’

The goal is to make sure the needs of communities are met, attract new businesses, protect environmental and natural resources, assist with infrastructure planning and provide a transparent planning process for residents. A main way the plan will be implemented will be through zoning. Once the new version of ForwardDallas is adopted, it can still be amended through other city policies, zoning changes or the adoption of smaller area plans.

The plan includes items called land use themes and placetypes. Land use themes will lay out how a community wants land to be used.

But one of the main bones of contention right now is the placetypes. Placetypes are what they sound like — types of places throughout the city, such as residential neighborhoods. There’s one placetype that has people particularly concerned, however: the community residential placetype. This placetype would include single-family homes as well as possibly multifamily developments.

That’s where the controversy lies. Sanders said the city is proposing placing multifamily developments of up to nine units in single-family neighborhoods. She said this could alter the character of the community. City staff will say that these multifamily developments will be context-sensitive, meaning they will resemble what’s already in the neighborhood. But Sanders isn’t so sure of that.

Sanders said some, particularly young people, think the increased density in single-family neighborhoods could usher in some housing affordability for the city. She isn’t so sure about that either. “It’s not about making housing more affordable for people, and I really wish they would stop telling this story,” she said.

Instead, she thinks ForwardDallas could just bring more unaffordable homes to the city and lock people out of homeownership. Sanders said many Dallas homes have been bought by investors in the last few years instead of by homeowners. Some 30% of Dallas-Fort Worth homes were purchased by investors in 2022, according to [The Dallas Morning News](#).

“Investors are not buying these houses to rent them out cheaply,” she said. “That’s not going to happen. Investors are not that altruistic. They are profit-minded, and good for them for being profit-minded. But let’s stop the nonsense and tell the truth about it. Packing multifamily units into single-family neighborhoods is not going to make any housing more affordable.”

Not everyone agrees with Sanders on that topic, of course. Mike Grace, an economic developer and certified urban planner, wrote in an opinion piece for [The Dallas Morning News](#) that higher land use in the form of smaller homes and lot sizes, accessory dwelling units, condos, multifamily and townhome developments and their close proximity to employment centers, “presents opportunities to create mixed-income communities and lowers housing costs.”

Bryan Tony, a political consultant and the lead organizer of the [Dallas Housing Coalition](#), said he would call himself a proponent of adopting a new comprehensive land use plan like the latest iteration of ForwardDallas. “This is an important document for any city to have,” he said.

He said one of the most promising aspects of ForwardDallas is how it discusses the need to accommodate more housing throughout the city. He doesn’t view ForwardDallas as an attack on single-family neighborhoods.

“We absolutely understand and appreciate all those who have come forward to advocate for their neighborhoods, and we believe in neighborhood planning, and everybody should be involved in that process,” Tony said.

But he believes that there has been a lot of misinformation floating around about ForwardDallas and what it will do to single-family neighborhoods. In his view, the plan won’t affect these neighborhoods as much as people may think.

“The true fact of the matter is that this document is saying that at least much of the housing should be focused along some of our transit corridors, some of our transit-oriented developable areas around DART stations and buses,” Tony said.

Additionally, Gilles told the *Observer*, “There aren’t recommendations within the plan to make changes to our established residential neighborhood. It discusses where can we potentially add some more housing in the future.”

Tony believes that what troubles people the most is their lack of understanding of the plan and some of the definitions in it. The plan mentions attached single-family homes and multiplexes, for example, and people may not know exactly what these look like.

“So, I think it requires a lot of just education,” Tony said. “But, you know, it’s one huge solution to the future of our city.”

He thinks the concern over multifamily developments in single-family neighborhoods is a bit overblown because before any changes can happen, they would need to go through the normal zoning processes. “These projects all go through city processes for rezoning before they could be built,” he said. “This isn’t a zoning document. This doesn’t mean that a more dense product will be built in the middle of your single-family neighborhood or right next door to you. That is, from our perspective, more along the fear-mongering side.”

He added, “We need to be able to have thoughtful conversations with one another and not just say ‘no’ to something when, in reality, there are a lot more protections that come along after this.”

However, some are worried that if the plan is adopted in its current form, it will just give city staff, plan commissioners and council members one more reason to support such zoning changes – because it aligns with the plan.

ForwardDallas isn’t the be-all and end-all for the city.

"It does cast that vision that we want to be a community," Tony said. "We want to welcome more neighbors and we can increase our tax base by building more thoughtful housing."

Some of Tony's thinking about ForwardDallas is that it could increase housing options in the city and potentially make housing more affordable. He also knows that some people are concerned that these other housing options will be just as unaffordable as other types of housing in the city.

"We're trying to help people understand that increasing the supply of housing will actually slow down the rising cost of housing," Tony said. "Hopefully, that slows down some of the actually rapidly increasing property tax values that people are getting back."

To him, it's simple supply and demand economics. "We'll have more housing being built, and that just filters throughout the economy."

If more units are allowed on a single lot, some worry developers will just build multifamily projects to multiply their profits, making nothing more affordable. But Tony doesn't think that will happen and said he knows developers who are willing to build with affordability in mind. He thinks ForwardDallas could pave the way for a better future for the city.

"I think we can all agree what we want at the end isn't, hopefully, what we're currently experiencing," he said.

On top of her other concerns, Sanders also believes that ForwardDallas has its eyes trained on the southern half of the city.

"They're saying 'Let's look at southern Dallas,'" Sanders explained. "But they're not looking at southern Dallas to increase homeownership. That's the problem."

She said it has been known for decades that homeownership is one of the best tools for building generational wealth, but that ForwardDallas is proposing more rental housing instead.

Sanders has been trying to eradicate food deserts in Oak Cliff for about 10 years now. She's spoken to grocery corporations and has been told some pretty condescending things over the years. One is that her part of town doesn't have enough of the "right kind of rooftops." She took that to mean there were too many renters in the area for a grocery corporation to feel comfortable setting up shop there.

"So, the more apartments and multifamily units that are built do two things," Sanders said. "They lock people out of homeownership, thus locking them out of generational wealth, and they continue the proliferation and survival of the food desert because they're [grocery stores] not counting those spaces when it comes to counting how many people they need to sustain a store. It's a cyclical thing. It's almost like a snake eating its own tail."

There are other places to develop multifamily housing besides single-family neighborhoods, she added, such as around DART stations. Indeed, there are plans included in ForwardDallas to develop housing near DART stations. These are called transit-oriented developments, which Sanders thinks are a good idea. There are also vacant retail spaces and strip malls that can be turned into multifamily housing.

“Nobody would complain about that,” she said. “But ForwardDallas is taking aim at single-family homes, single-family neighborhoods. It makes no sense, except if you look at something that they recently revealed, which is how much taxes the city collects from multifamily units versus single-family units. So, they said the quiet part out loud. It’s about the money.”

Sanders understands that the city needs more money, but doesn’t think this should happen at the expense of single-family neighborhoods. She’s also worried that what makes Dallas a desirable place to own a home might be destroyed.

“Just place these multifamily developments that they’re pushing so hard in places where they make sense and where they will not disrupt single-family neighborhoods,” Sander said. “Because this is some kind of municipal suicide in my opinion.”

TOLL TRAP: HOW TEXAS' EXPLOSIVE GROWTH LED TO A TOLL-BUILDING SPREE

Lawmakers turned to toll roads to boost the Texas economy and address population growth without raising taxes, but the consequences have adversely affected some drivers.

By Yamil Berard



At dusk, traffic flows on the TExpress Lanes (left) along westbound SH 183 (right) at American Blvd in Euless, Texas, February 6, 2024. The price was \$15.45 for those entering the at Industrial Blvd to I-820. (Tom Fox / Staff Photographer)

Every day, thousands of drivers jump on toll roads to ease their commutes to work and school.

Toll roads overlook international bridges and crossings on the Texas-Mexico border, they connect drivers to airports all over the state and they circumnavigate urban cores by way of loops and tunnels.

Why This Story Matters

Millions of Texans rely on toll roads daily in a state that has built more paid thoroughfares over the past two decades than almost all U.S. states combined. The affordability, safety and management of these roads impact us all, especially as some leaders admit more are likely coming to handle substantial growth throughout the state and in North Texas.

Texas has so many toll roads that it has earned the distinction of building more miles than nearly all other states combined. Picture this: If you stretched the state's 852 miles of toll roads

across the eastern U.S., they would pass through 13 states — from Maine to South Carolina, a yearlong *Dallas Morning News* investigation has found.

The high concentration of toll roads came about because state leaders disdained higher taxes but needed a way to prepare for an influx of new residents. But now those same roads are adversely affecting drivers all over Texas and are being denounced by some of those same elected officials at the state Capitol, *The News'* investigation found.

Toll roads have engulfed some communities, the examination found, making it difficult for residents — especially those who live in middle- to low-income neighborhoods — to avoid them or travel easily without them. They have also brought complaints from motorists and some local judges about excessive fees and unfair treatment by some of the state's largest toll operators.

Each year, thousands of drivers are hauled into court for unpaid fees. Some have their car registrations yanked and others are sent to jail even when they have proof the fees they were charged are incorrect. These practices make Texas one of the country's harshest and most unforgiving states for unpaid toll fines, the investigation revealed.

Even more troubling is that the evidence most often used to convict drivers for unpaid toll fees may not hold up in court, several national legal and transportation analysts told *The News*. That's because the penalties are based on an image of a vehicle's license plate and not proof that shows the identity of a car's driver.

"You have to prove in a criminal case beyond a reasonable doubt that a person drove a vehicle through without paying a toll," said [Lisa Foster, a retired California superior court judge who is now co-director of the Fines and Fees Justice Center, an organization that works to ensure fines are equitably imposed and enforced.](#) "You can't prosecute a car, you have to prosecute people for doing things illegally."

These are just some of the findings of *The News'* investigation.

Toll Trap: How Texas' explosive growth led to a toll-building spree

Investigative Reporter Yamil Berard breaks down the affordability, safety and management of toll roads throughout the state and in North Texas.

For its review, *The News* read thousands of pages of legislative reports, transportation studies and financial statements and audits for toll roads operated by Texas' three largest toll agencies since 1998. More than two dozen urban planning specialists, tollway advocacy groups, public policy researchers and mobility engineers were interviewed.

The News also examined roadway and toll data from the Texas Department of Transportation and population density information, filed and read reports from dozens of open records requests and attempted to speak with all 22 members of the state House and Senate transportation committees, along with Gov. Greg Abbott and other high-ranking current and previous elected state leaders.

Among *The News'* other findings:

- Texas leads the U.S. in the number of tollway operators — and has 128 toll facilities that include bridges, turnpikes, U.S. routes, interstate highways, expressways, airport connectors, parkways, ship channels, loops, tunnels and turnpikes, according to TxDOT.

- North Texas has more toll facilities than any other region in the state. In Dallas County, toll roads make up nearly one-third of all major thoroughfares. They account for 22% of all roads in Collin County, 17% in Denton County and 16% in Tarrant County, according to toll highway data from TxDOT.
- About 1.4 million people in North Texas live in areas where tollways are within a one-mile radius of their homes and their free road options — often several miles away from their homes — are among the state’s most congested. The concentration of toll roads in the region also disproportionately impacts residents in predominantly moderate- to low-income neighborhoods where the [median](#) household income of about \$55,000 is less than the state median of \$73,035 a year, according to the 2022 American Community Survey of the U.S. Census Bureau.
- North Texas is the epicenter for enforcement action for unpaid fees.
- A disproportionate number of people cited by Texas courts for failure to pay toll fees are Black, even though Black people make up only 13% of Texas licensed drivers, according to an analysis of 10 years’ worth of data voluntarily provided by municipal and justice of the peace courts to the Texas Department of Public Safety and obtained by *The News* under the Texas Public Information Act.
- In North Texas, tickets for unpaid toll fees now exceed legal cases for other disputes heard in some of the region’s justice of the peace courts and at least two judges told *The News* that toll operators are often inflexible with drivers with large balances.
- State lawmakers gave up most of their control of toll roads to the private and public entities that own and operate them. That lax oversight has led to at least one major publicly exposed safety risk with fatal consequences. A crash during the February 2021 ice storm where six Texans died on a toll road near downtown Fort Worth was caused by the operator’s failure to monitor and treat the elevated section during freezing rain, as well as a lack of safety coordination between the Texas Department of Transportation and the private tollway operator that owns the [North Tarrant Express](#), according to the [final investigative report](#) by the National Transportation Safety Board.

“We were sold a bill of goods,” said state Rep. Ramon Romero, D-Fort Worth, a member of the House Transportation Committee who represents the community that experienced the tragic car pileup, the deadliest in Texas history. “We were just looking for how to find money. We now know that this was the wrong way to do it.”

Yet while he and several other lawmakers told *The News* they regret approving so many toll roads, there’s a strong chance more will be built.

Texas’ population [surpassed 30 million people in 2022](#) and is expected to reach 47.4 million by 2050, according to [state demographer Lloyd Porter of the Texas Demographic Center](#).

The state is ill-equipped to serve millions of additional drivers in the future without more toll roads, state Rep. Terry Canales, D-Edinburg, who chairs the House Transportation Committee, told *The News*.

Earlier this year, Canales urged Texas Speaker of the House Dade Phelan, R-Beaumont, to appoint a group of legislators to examine the state’s toll system. If his request is approved, a

committee would ultimately make recommendations for potential reforms during the 2025 legislative session.

“It’s the confusion, the great disparity from toll to toll, the various toll setting agencies, the private and public entities,” Canales said. “It’s a whole hodgepodge and there’s no uniformity and that, in and of itself, creates distrust.”

Toll operators, however, emphasize their economic clout.

North Texas Tollway Authority executive director James Hofmann, who declined an interview and then requested questions in writing, said one significant impact of toll roads is the increases in property values nearby. This increase, he wrote, helps local governments collect more tax money to support their communities. From 2007 to 2019, within five miles on each side of NTTA roadways, property values more than doubled to \$334 billion, Hofmann wrote, citing [an internal study](#) he provided to *The News*. NTTA owns and operates five toll roads, two bridges and a tunnel used by more than 10 million motorists every year.



State Rep. Ramón Romero stands on the 28th Street bridge that overlooks Interstate 35W in Fort Worth, near the location of a crash that killed six Texans during an ice storm in February 2021. (Tom Fox / Staff Photographer)

State Rep. Ramon Romero, D-Fort Worth, a member of the House Transportation Committee, explains why he is opposed to private toll roads in North Texas.

“It was an unbelievably great economic development thing,” said Michael Morris, a regional planner who has worked for the North Texas Council of Governments since 1979 and since

1990 has served as director of transportation for the 12-county metropolitan planning organization.

“You’ve got to remember Dallas-Fort Worth is growing at a million people every seven years,” Morris said. “The magnitude of growth, we’re talking 4, 5 million people. Just think of all the infrastructure we need.”

Every vehicle on a toll road is one less vehicle on free congested roadways, and that reduces traffic and congestion, Jori Liu, spokeswoman for the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority, said.

People also need to remember that toll roads are a personal choice, she said. Everyone has to pay taxes, she said, but toll fees — they’re optional.

How it started

To understand the state’s tollway system, it’s important to understand why toll roads were ever built.

In the 1950s, people were desperate to find a quick way to connect downtown Dallas to downtown Fort Worth. North Texas leaders knew they couldn’t rely on money from the federal government to build new roads, and they didn’t want to raise taxes to pay for them either.

So the Texas Legislature in 1953 created the Texas Turnpike Authority, an independent entity, to build toll roads and bridges throughout the state.

In 1957, the state’s first toll road was unveiled on what is now Interstate 30, then called the Dallas/Fort Worth Turnpike. Proceeds from the turnpike were later used to build a second toll road, the Dallas North Tollway, in 1968 to connect downtown Dallas to Collin County and northern Dallas to Denton County.

By the 1980s, Houston leaders also wanted to relieve congestion, so Harris County commissioners asked voters to endorse tolls there, and loops of them were built.

A decade later, the Legislature abolished the Texas Turnpike Authority and created a new division within the Texas Department of Transportation. In 1997, a new state law created the NTTA, which received assets from the defunct Turnpike Authority.

Until then, other than TxDOT, only the NTTA in Dallas and the Harris County Toll Road Authority had the power to build tolls, transportation officials told *The News*.

By the early 2000s, TxDOT had no plans to rehabilitate or expand its highways, and the state didn’t want to raise taxes for transportation needs, said former state Rep. Mike Krusee, R-Austin, who served at the time as head of the House Transportation Committee.

State lawmakers’ concerns about Texas’ transportation issues were growing more serious after news that technology company Dell — then Austin’s largest private employer — planned to expand into a \$200 million office and manufacturing facility in Tennessee. Company executives divulged that its headquarters needed to reside in a region with a highway system that ensured speedier deliveries to East Coast customers, according to news reports at the time.

A few years later in 2003, [federal law under then-President George W. Bush removed restrictions](#) that blocked governments from using private financing to support infrastructure

projects. This opened up opportunities for TxDOT to explore road construction with the private sector.

An overwhelming enthusiasm enveloped the Governor's Mansion when officials learned that the private sector might be the solution to their transportation woes, Krusee and others said.



Texas Gov. Rick Perry fields questions about the planned Trans Texas Corridor, while visiting the Texas Department of Transportation Office in Tyler, Texas, Wednesday, Jan. 30, 2002. (D.J. Peters / AP)

That's when Rick Perry, who had assumed the office of governor when Bush was elected president, set his sights on transforming the state into the southwestern economic hub of the U.S., said Bill Miller, a longtime Republican political strategist in Austin.

The way to do that, Perry told lawmakers and the public, was to build toll roads to connect business interests and commerce to the rest of the world.

"It was an explanation that was easy to remember and it had some plausibility," Miller said.

Perry knew the cost to build roads was more than what the state generated from its motor fuels tax, said Robert Poole, an MIT-educated engineer. Poole met with Texas leaders to discuss partnering with the private sector when he served as director of transportation policy for Reason Foundation, a libertarian research organization in Southern California.

"Congestion was going to just really kill the economic thing if Texas didn't do some major investments in it," Poole said.

The deep dive

By the 2000s, tolls were all the rage. Lawmakers passed a frenzy of laws allowing local governments to approve toll roads without permission from the Texas Transportation Commission. That's also when toll operators were handed the power to criminally pursue drivers for unpaid tolls.

Between 2001 and 2021, Texas built more than 628 miles of toll roads, records show. And with Ric Williamson, appointed in 2004 as chairman of the Texas Transportation Commission, and Perry guiding the way, TxDOT set aside \$9 million to market toll roads to the public.

The state also paid for key TxDOT officials to fly all over Europe, including the United Kingdom, France, Spain and Italy, to examine their tollway systems, according to news reports at the time.

"With revenue-sharing, there is always a nervousness that the private sector is going to make money. It will and that's OK, that's what we expect," Phil Russell, then division director for TxDOT, told *New Civil Engineer*, an industry publication, in January 2007.

Most of the private operators' deals didn't involve any state money. Private operators paid the design and construction costs. In return, they collected toll fees on the roads as part of lease agreements they held with the state. The contracts, [known as concessions](#), were for 50 years. After 50 years passed, the contracts stated that private companies would transfer the operation, maintenance and toll collections of the roads back to the state. Texas lawmakers could then decide if they wanted to continue collecting fees.

After he saw so much support for private tolls, Krusee, the Perry ally who served as chairman of the House Transportation Committee at the time, worked to expand them, giving the state's counties and regions the authority to borrow billions of dollars from investors to build their own.

"I didn't want to create a monopoly where TxDOT got to decide what your region was going to do," he told *The News*. "I wanted every region to determine its own fate."

In addition to the NTTA in Dallas and the Harris County Toll Road Authority in Houston, eight regional mobility authorities were created in different corners of the state from Central Texas to Cameron, and also in Grayson and Hidalgo counties and Northeast Texas, near the Sulphur River, the Alamo and Camino Real areas, TxDOT records show. Six additional public toll road operators were also created in Waller, Montgomery, Fort Bend, Brazoria, Chambers and Collin counties, TxDOT records show.

All of the regional agencies were set up as county toll authorities, and they established their own safety and construction standards. Some counties and cities embellished their toll roads with landscaping, guard rails, art sculptures and provided more visible signage or roadside assistance.

Tollway operators also didn't overlook the opportunity to lobby for more laws that guaranteed their ability to collect toll revenues. Over a decade beginning in 2001, criminal penalties and other laws were introduced that permitted operators to block vehicle registrations and impound vehicles.

Meanwhile, North Texas — where the private sector built more toll roads than any other region — ended up with [more than 100 miles of toll lanes](#) under [contracts signed from 2007 to 2016](#) that raised prices when congestion on the nontolled roads was at its worst.

Morris, North Texas' No. 1 regional planner and an engineer, said the strategy to raise prices on tolled lanes during peak traffic has kept traffic congestion under control.

It was "the D-FW miracle," he said.

Limited oversight

The enthusiasm for tolls lasted for years, but began to change after some lawmakers realized why toll road companies were so eager to build roads in the state.

"Texas made a mistake," said former state Rep. Joe Pickett, D-El Paso, who led the House Transportation Committee in 2009 and 2015.

In 2007, lawmakers started voicing strong opposition to the terms of the transportation deals. That included anti-toll activists such as Terri Hall, founder and executive director of [Texans Uniting for Reform & Freedom](#) (TURF), a grassroots organization that formed that year to oppose tollways that were not backed by voters.

That year, [Cintra](#) — a private toll company — won a bid to build a portion of a new toll road in Collin County.

Under the contract, the company, Madrid-based Cintra (Concesiones de Infraestructuras de Transporte) S.A., offered to pay the state \$2.7 billion for the tollway project that would cost roughly \$500 million, state Sen. Robert Nichols, R-Jacksonville, said. Nichols served as a commissioner for TxDOT until 2006 when he was elected to the Senate and is now chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee.

As part of the details of the deal, Nichols said he noticed that the state would be forced to hand over toll revenues for 52 years. That's when he said he understood why so many private operators had built toll roads in Texas.

Said Nichols: "Why would somebody, for a project that's only going to cost \$500 million, why would you write a check for \$2.7 billion?"

"The answer was the revenue stream over the next 40 years was \$34 billion," he said.

About the same time, he realized that state leaders had overlooked other important contract provisions on previously approved tollway projects — "dirty details," Nichols called them.

For example, the contract blocked TxDOT from expanding the capacity of nearby free lanes connected to the toll roads and deterred the state for decades from buying the toll roads back from the private companies that built them. In other words, TxDOT would not be able to build additional free lanes to add more capacity for drivers for 52 years.

That provision alone would have been catastrophic for Collin County, one of the fastest-growing counties in Texas, Nichols said.

With its eyes opened, TxDOT [ultimately rescinded](#) Cintra's bid for construction of State Highway 121, Nichols said.

Another important detail that Nichols and other lawmakers discovered in most of the state's toll road contracts was their lack of transparency: Most private operators didn't have to disclose information to lawmakers about their financial or safety records.

A [2014 Texas A&M Transportation Institute study](#) — the last independent comprehensive review of tolls in the state — highlighted that lack of transparency. “In some cases, data were not readily available from public sources or not received from the specific tolling agency,” the study found.

In 2019, state legislators tried to obtain more information by enacting [a law to force public toll operators to disclose certain financial documents](#), including their expense and revenue statements.

However, lawmakers did not have the authority to require all tollway operators to submit their financial statements publicly, *The News*’ investigation found. For example, 2021 data showing Texas tollway operators collected more than \$2.1 billion in toll revenue — of an estimated \$19 billion for the U.S. as a whole — does not include revenue from private tollway operators, as well as some public tollway systems, according to the [International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association](#).

To add to the gaps in transparency, the state doesn’t collect any data to compare the performance of toll roads, including their costs or vehicle volumes. That would be difficult, according to the authors of the Texas A&M Transportation Institute study, because operators use different methods to calculate their toll revenues. While payment from a driver with a toll tag is recorded in real time, payment from a driver who pays by mail is recorded when that payment is received, according to the [study](#).

Some lawmakers think some of the lax requirements and mandates on toll operators initially were purposeful. As elected officials, they could tell voters who complained that they weren’t responsible for pricing or safety concerns, Pickett said.

The lack of state oversight surfaced as a significant concern after the deadly crash during the 2021 ice storm. State lawmakers, including leaders of both the Senate and House Transportation committees, said they demanded but were not provided with a copy of video footage that showed the tollway before the crash occurred. They sought the footage to see if the company had protected the toll road and the adjacent free lanes with sand before the crash.

The company that operates the road, [North Tarrant Express Mobility Partners](#), led by Cintra, declined interview requests but in emailed responses executives said they “cooperated in a timely manner” with state leaders, including the governor’s office, after the crash on Interstate 35W.

Through a spokeswoman, Abbott declined to comment and referred questions about the state’s tollway system to TxDOT.

A TxDOT spokesman did not agree to an interview and did not address most of what the newspaper asked in writing. Tolls were seen “as a tool in the funding toolbox to address congestion and mobility issues,” spokesman Adam Hammons wrote.

TxDOT cannot comment on its role in any future efforts at toll reform, Hammons wrote.

“TxDOT is only a resource for the Legislature and is prohibited from lobbying for any legislation,” he wrote.



Mass casualty wreck on I-35W and Northside Drive in Fort Worth, Texas on Thursday, February 11, 2021. (Lawrence Jenkins / Special Contributor)

Looking ahead

Canales and other House members worry that despite what they've learned, Texas will soon face the same predicament: not having enough money to build and expand highways as when state officials first approved toll roads to prepare for explosive growth decades ago.

Even with the \$6 billion the state collects annually from taxes approved by voters in recent years, it will be short on money for roads for the millions moving to Texas every 10 years, Canales said. He cited a 2023 study by the American Council of Engineering Companies of Texas that says the state is underfunding road construction projects by \$8.5 billion a year.

"Texas is in a very dark spot and it's going to take some very forward-thinking, open-minded people to even begin to dig our way out of it," Canales said.

In the study he hopes will still launch this year, the committee could require toll operators to provide more insight into how they manage these roads, Canales said.

Another focus could be how to accommodate drivers who live in areas surrounded by toll roads where the free options are either miles away, in the opposite direction or prone to heavy traffic.

For example, *The News'* investigation found those who live in Little Elm, The Colony, Hebron and Carrollton and are near the Dallas North Tollway must travel at least 2 miles east toward Frisco to access the free State Highway 289.

For those who commute from Arlington, Fort Worth, Grand Prairie and Irving on State Highway 183 or I-30, drivers can avoid congested roads by heading north to use the President George Bush Turnpike. But if they want to avoid paying, they must continue to drive east about five miles to reach [Texas Loop 12](#), which is notoriously congested.

For residents in Cross Roads, a small town east of Denton, almost every trip south entails a toll. That's because the fastest way out of the area is the [Lake Lewisville Toll Bridge](#).

[Drivers with a toll tag will pay \\$1.47 — \\$2.94 without a toll tag — to cross the bridge](#) and it will take them 24 minutes to travel roughly nine miles to Interstate 35E in Hickory Creek, where they can then start the drive south to Dallas or southwest to one of the affluent suburbs of Tarrant County, such as Southlake or Grapevine.

However, a driver who wants to avoid the bridge has to drive north to U.S. Highway 380, west to Loop 288, south to I-35E. Then, they must drive on I-35E to get to the same point in Hickory Creek. The 18-mile drive could take 50 minutes or more during rush hour.

For many drivers, a \$1.50 toll to cross a bridge makes a lot of sense — especially if they don't have to pay it often. It's why, in hopes of saving time and money, many people across the state invest in toll tags.

Last year, 6.7 million North Texans purchased toll tags, NTTA officials said. Toll tag customers averaged 188 toll transactions in 2022, according to the NTTA.

Those drivers include Demara Morrow, the chief financial officer of a small Dallas millwork company; Shane Hardin, a superintendent of a national construction company with offices in Dallas-Fort Worth; Tom Wilder, the district clerk of Tarrant County, and of course disabled Army veteran Morris Shepard of Mesquite.

They all have one thing in common: They thought a toll tag would make their lives and commutes easier.

They were wrong.

Part 2: Texas has some of the most aggressive laws in the books for toll violations. It is among only a handful of states that criminalize drivers for unpaid fees and where courtrooms regularly issue arrest warrants over the debts.

DALLAS' MEDICAL DISTRICT AIMS TO PRIORITIZE PEOPLE OVER CARS

The Texas Trees Foundation will tonight announce progress on the neighborhood's redesign.

By Matt Goodman
May 13, 2024



Can you picture a tree-lined pedestrian path along Harry Hines Boulevard? The Texas Trees Foundation can. Texas Trees Foundation

The Southwestern Medical District has succeeded—if your metric is world-renowned healthcare and research—despite how inhospitable the neighborhood [can feel to actual people](#). The home of UT Southwestern Medical Center, Parkland, and Children's Health is also Dallas' largest heat island, where miles of concrete soak up the sun. Its wide streets encourage speeding and can make it perilous for pedestrians, a troubling reality considering physicians, nurses, and students split their time between the district's sprawling campuses. This pocket off of Interstate 35 was formerly an industrial area, and it still feels like it, despite its hospitals treating 3.3 million patients and employing more than 42,000 workers.

For the last seven years, [the Texas Trees Foundation has been imagining a new reality](#) for the city's critical economic and healthcare hub. The Medical District overhaul has turned the humble nonprofit into a project manager of an ambitious bit of urban design, daring to reengineer a neighborhood of more than 1,000 acres where patients can find solace in nature while doctors don't have to dodge Chargers.

Tonight Texas Trees will announce that the project has reached 30 percent design status, a critical milestone that allows the city to begin planning engineering and for the federally mandated environmental clearance to begin. Too, the feds can now consider the project “shovel ready,” which increases the likelihood of the project getting more federal funding.

It is a practical extension of the organization’s [research around curbing urban heat islands](#) while adding to the city’s tree canopy. But the work in the Medical District has a more holistic goal, too. Modern healthcare architecture has responded to a bevy of studies that show patient outcomes improve when design considers their experience. This has led to more spacious rooms, windows, improved lighting, and other ways to make patients more comfortable that had rarely been considered in hospitals. All three of the largest entities in the district have employed tenets of “social design” in their new buildings. But the conditions outside reflect this neighborhood’s history as an industrial center, when trucks rumbled along Motor Avenue (now Medical District Drive).



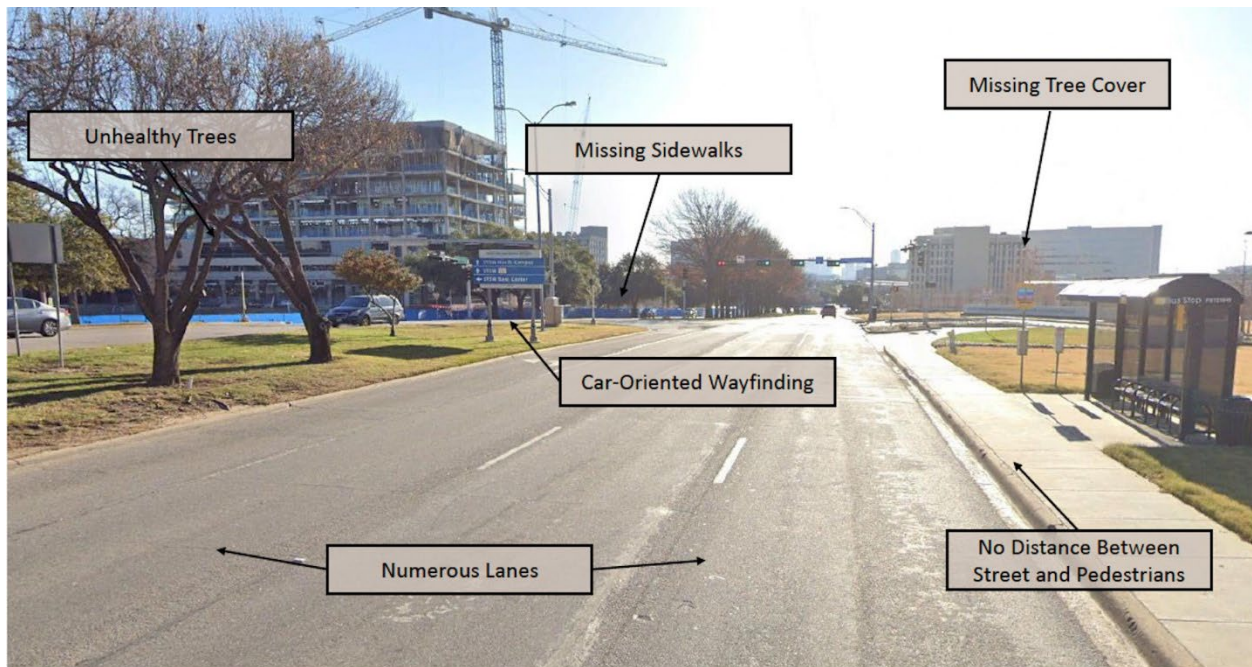
The scope of Texas Trees' plans for the Southwestern Medical District. Texas Trees

“Trails and bike networks help to get people more active, gathering spaces create opportunity for social cohesion, and the ability to retreat into nature has certain developmental benefits,” said David Whitley, the owner of DRW Planning Studio, which is handling the project’s design. “All of that combined improves our urban environment and our urban environmental health.”

The project treats Harry Hines Boulevard as its spine, extending about 2 miles north from Market Center up to Mockingbird. The first phase involves pedestrianizing Harry Hines from Butler Street to Medical District Drive, adding sidewalks away from traffic on either side of the road as well as a two-way cycle track on the south side of the thoroughfare that will tie into the Loop Trail, near the Trinity River.

For much of its life, Harry Hines was a state highway that took Dallas residents to Denton. Drivers still treat it like that. Texas Trees studied speeds along the corridor and found that an average of 70 percent drivers travel faster than the speed limit.

“In a normal world, [Harry Hines] would have developed as a boulevard in a healthcare campus,” says David Biegler, chair of the planning organization that helps coordinate efforts among the partners in the Southwestern Medical District. “That’s what you have to turn it back into.”



The Medical District has some work to do.

The plan envisions a tree-lined Harry Hines with wide sidewalks and cycling trails, a park in place of a cloverleaf intersection that presently shoots cars in all directions, improved connectivity between the campuses, and strategic tree planting that the organization believes will drop temperatures by as much as 20 degrees in some areas. The agency wasn’t able to get permission to take in a lane—EMS representatives were nervous ambulance ingress and egress—but its design would allow for the two exterior lanes to one day become protected facilities for buses and emergency vehicles. The primary focus is making the street safer for pedestrians by separating them from traffic.

This is the first phase of the redesign, which is expected to cost about \$38 million. This portion is fully funded and designed. Texas Trees anticipates breaking ground by the end of next year. The organization is also only \$4 million away from funding the second phase, which will zoom into Harry Hines at Inwood. Texas Trees will seek permission from the city to tear out the cloverleaf and replace it with a 10-acre park that will serve dual purposes: safer, easier access between the campuses and much-needed greenspace. Renderings show grade changes and overlooks, a hilltop lawn and a limestone escarpment framing an area where trees tower over tables and chairs. A footbridge is planned to take walkers over Harry Hines, which is an important feature considering there is presently no safe way for pedestrians to cross the traffic.

Cars using Inwood will continue through a tunnel below the park, while Harry Hines traffic will be subject to new stoplights when entering and leaving the area. The park will sit between O'Donnell Grove and the bird sanctuary, presently the only two parklike features in the district.

“Go back to COVID, and those nurses, doctors didn't have any place to go outside, to immerse themselves and bring down their level of stress,” says Janette Monear, the president and CEO of Texas Trees. “We're also working with the hospitals. How do we stitch their campuses together with this?”

Much of the design was informed by the team's research. Texas Trees placed 30 temperature and humidity sensors along Harry Hines, attempting to gauge conditions at various spots: sunny, “deep shade” from trees, and partial shade. Five anemometers—machines that gauge wind conditions—were placed in areas with high, medium, and low winds. Its findings informed the decision to place a two-way cycle track on the south side of Harry Hines.

They polled the district's users about where they feel safest walking and where they avoid because of extreme heat. Some of the temperature gauges, particularly near bus stops, showed wide disparity in temperatures mere feet away from each other. An unshaded bit of concrete near a bus stop came back at 127 degrees, while a shaded portion of the sidewalk less than 10 feet away was just 77 degrees. Texas Trees and its partner Hyphae Design Labs attempted to collect examples of these “microclimates” that additional tree cover could help regulate.

They've found that the standard methods of tree planting won't work here. Generally, trees are planted by measuring 30 feet between the center of one and the center of another. “That's not how trees grow,” Monear says. Instead, the organization plans to plant trees in groves along Harry Hines, where the canopy can more closely mimic forest conditions instead of typical public landscape architecture that doesn't consider their biology.

“Root grafts of the same species will grow together, so if there's a drought, they share the nutrients and water,” she says. “And the fact that they shade each other lowers the transpiration rates.” (That's when trees lose their water because of a variety of conditions.)

The renderings envision a dense collection of trees that effectively shade the walking and cycling paths below, which Monear believes is a new way of planting trees in public right of way. She says this method should double the lifespan of these trees, going from 15 to 20 years, on average, to 30 to 40.

“You start to mimic the forest by bringing in an understory,” Whitley said. “You have that cooling effect of being kind of on the forest floor, along with all the other mental and physical benefits of experiencing that kind of environment.”

There is a significant economic interest in improving this land that City Hall forgot. Outside of Baylor Scott and White's compound just east of Deep Ellum, the Southwestern Medical District is effectively the nerve center for healthcare in the city of Dallas and the region as a whole. As such, the project has found financial interest from a number of entities. Texas Trees has raised about \$34 million for the project: \$13 million in private dollars, \$7.5 million in city bond funding from 2017, \$7.5 million from the county, and another \$6 million from the North Central Texas Council of Governments. Monear says she still needs to raise another \$4 million to fully fund the park at Inwood, and she anticipates pursuing federal dollars to do so.



A rendering of what a park might look like at Inwood and Harry Hines. Texas Trees Foundation

The entire project is expected to cost about \$190 million with private fundraising accounting for about a third.

There are billions of dollars worth of construction underway in the Southwestern Medical District. Children's and UT Southwestern are building a \$5 billion pediatric campus at Harry Hines and Mockingbird. The state of Texas partnered with UT Southwestern to build the new Texas Behavioral Health Center, the first such facility in Dallas. UTD will soon have a \$120 million biomedical building, and the county is constructing a new lab and research facility here.

"The city's view of the Medical District, correctly, is it's one of our primary economic areas, meaning it's at the center of economic activity that has a bearing on the city and the region," said Biegler. "You can't have people going 60 mph down Harry Hines and create the environment you need."

Texas Trees will tonight signal a new path forward, one that recognizes the importance of the district and cares for the people who go there—just like the institutions have invested in the neighborhood's buildings.

PATH AHEAD STILL UNCERTAIN FOR DALLAS-TO-FORT WORTH BULLET TRAIN

Who will lead the project, and how it will be funded, remain in question.

By Amber Gaudet
May 13, 2024



The model n700 bullet train that now operates in Japan. Regional transportation planners hope to advance a Dallas-to-Fort Worth bullet train, but an agency to lead the project has yet to be identified.(JR Central)

Regional transportation planners hope to advance a Dallas-to-Fort Worth bullet train, but the path to making the project a reality remains murky.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments shared updates to the proposed project during a public meeting Monday. It would connect to the separate [Dallas-to-Houston line](#) led by Texas Central and Amtrak, but unlike its 220-mile counterpart, an agency to lead the project has yet to be identified.

Also at issue is where the project's funding would come from and the final alignment. NCTCOG has said it could be funded through a public-private partnership, but funding would be addressed after an outside entity takes on the project.

The hunt for that agency wouldn't begin until after the proposed rail line has been environmentally cleared. It's currently undergoing the National Environmental Policy Act Review process, which is expected to wrap up in early 2025.

NCTCOG has had preliminary conversations with Amtrak and foreign entities that have successful high-speed rail lines abroad, Wheeler said.

"Especially for foreign investors that see the economic benefit of high-speed rail, they're very concerned with the NEPA process from a standpoint of it introduces risk into their pocketbook," said Brendon Wheeler, transportation planning program manager at NCTCOG. "They don't know how long it's going to be, they don't know how much it's going to cost. [We said] let us take that on as a region, and then we can promote a project that has a cleared corridor."

The Dallas-to-Houston project also remains largely unfunded.

Some Dallas City Council members have previously called into question the need for an expansion of the Dallas-to-Houston leg another 30 miles west. The proposed elevated rail route, which would approach Dallas from the west along Interstate 30, has also [come under fire](#).

Hunt Realty Investments, one of downtown Dallas' biggest property owners, said in March that the current alignment would compromise a planned \$5 billion development. It would slice through the southwest corner of downtown Dallas where Hunt owns the more than [20-acre Reunion property](#), which includes the [Hyatt Regency Hotel and Reunion Tower](#). A new [\\$3 billion convention center](#) is also being planned near the route downtown.

Related: [Hunt Realty: Elevated high-speed rail line could thwart \\$5 billion Reunion project](#)

An elevated station at the Cedars in Dallas has been federally cleared, making planning directors hesitant to embark on a lengthy process to move it.

NCTCOG is still "working through" some elements of the project with stakeholders, Wheeler said.

Planners have insisted the project would benefit Dallas-Fort Worth by offering more transit options, attracting high-dollar investments around the stations and making the region a destination for travelers.

"What our project's intending to do is not just build or plan for a high-speed rail line from Fort Worth to Dallas," Wheeler said. "It's intending to bring the fabric of our existing and planned transit systems around the region into a single point to create better access throughout the region."

The final station locations in Arlington and Fort Worth, both underground, will be identified as part of the environmental clearance process. As of now the Arlington station is expected to be constructed under Interstate 30 near Stadium Drive, while the Fort Worth station would be located between Fort Worth Central Station and [Texas A&M University's new campus](#).

As Dallas-Fort Worth continues to grow, planners say multimodal transportation solutions will be critical for moving people through the region.

“We’re currently at 8 million people, looking to be about 12 million people in the next 25 years,” Wheeler said. “If we don’t plan for this corridor today, we’re going to lose this corridor.”

TELECOMPETITOR

TEXAS COALITION AIMS TO USE BROADBAND, DIGITAL EQUITY TO CREATE A SMART REGION

By Phil Britt
May 13, 2024

A Texas broadband coalition aims to establish a smart region in the northern part of the state. Goals include bringing broadband to more households and improving digital inclusivity in the region.

The North Texas Innovation Alliance (NXTIA), a 501(c)3 regional consortium of over 40 municipalities, agencies, corporations and academic institutions across North Texas, is partnering with the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) on the initiative, to be known as the Internet for North Texas Coalition (I4NTX).

It's essentially the relaunch of a coalition originally launched in 2020, when it established Operation Connectivity. That initiative illustrated disparities in broadband access at the school district and neighborhood level, and set a goal of connecting every K-16 student to high-speed broadband at home.

Members of the Texas Governor's Broadband Council also will help spearhead the I4NTX initiative.

"The I4NTX Coalition aims to revive the intent of Operation Connectivity and work with cross-sector teams to bring broadband access to more households throughout North Texas, leveraging the established coalition built by the NTXIA," said Jennifer Sanders, executive director of NTXIA, in a [prepared statement](#).

"We are honored to lead this effort and continue to grow the momentum in creating a digitally equitable future. With the support and guidance of our public sector partners, and subject matter expertise from the private sector, we are setting a strong foundation for sustainable digital growth and accessibility in the region."

NCTCOG has an innovative "broadband as transportation" program that "recognizes internet access as a crucial transportation mode and establishes a robust framework for promoting widespread digital inclusivity across the North Texas region," said Connor Sadro of NCTCOG in a prepared statement.

The NCTCOG program was recently approved by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) for North Texas.

"By declaring broadband a mode of transportation, we are not just expanding infrastructure; we are enhancing educational outcomes, economic opportunities, access to healthcare and quality of life improvements for residents impacted most by the digital divide," said Sadro.

The I4NTX coalition will "engage public and academic entities across the region to address key elements and challenges of broadband efforts, including data, policy, infrastructure and equitable access," according to a press release.

The coalition will also lead a subcommittee of 20-30 public sector practitioners that will advise elected officials from the RTC, with the goal of forming a legislative program to address regional digital needs. It will also encourage local municipalities to share best practices for achieving universal broadband access.

“I4NTX is a visionary step towards transforming how we understand and implement infrastructure for widespread connectivity,” said Matt Yeager, a digital equity and connectivity advocate and member of the Texas Governor’s Broadband Development Council. “Broadband is as crucial as roads and bridges in today’s world and ensuring that every resident has broadband access is fundamental to our region’s growth and prosperity.”

One of NXTIA’s partners is [Peachtree Corners](#), which also has been involved with T-Mobile on technology initiatives. Other partners include Cisco, Accenture and Verizon.

DALLAS MORNING NEWS

TEXAS TOLLWAY AUTHORITIES SHOW LITTLE MERCY FOR TEXANS OF COLOR, VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

The News' examination found that the methods Texas uses to criminally charge vehicle owners for unpaid toll road fees may stand on shaky legal ground.

By Yamil Berard
May 14, 2024



Tarrant County Justice of the Peace Precinct 5 Sergio L. De Leon shows some of the thousands of older pending toll road pleas that have been stored in a room at his Fort Worth Police Administration Building office in downtown Fort Worth, February 22, 2024. De Leon has been deluged with toll citations -- so much so that he has asked the Tarrant County Commissioners court for an additional clerk. (Tom Fox / Staff Photographer)

On a crisp February morning, LaTasha and Morris Shepard stood in front of a Denton County justice of the peace, trying to avoid jail.

A letter delivered a few weeks before to the couple's McKinney home didn't mince words: If Morris Shepard didn't show up to court, a warrant would go out for his arrest.

Morris Shepard is a disabled military veteran in his 60s who served 17 years in the Army. LaTasha, his wife, works as a legal advocate for the National Urban League. They knew they could not miss court.

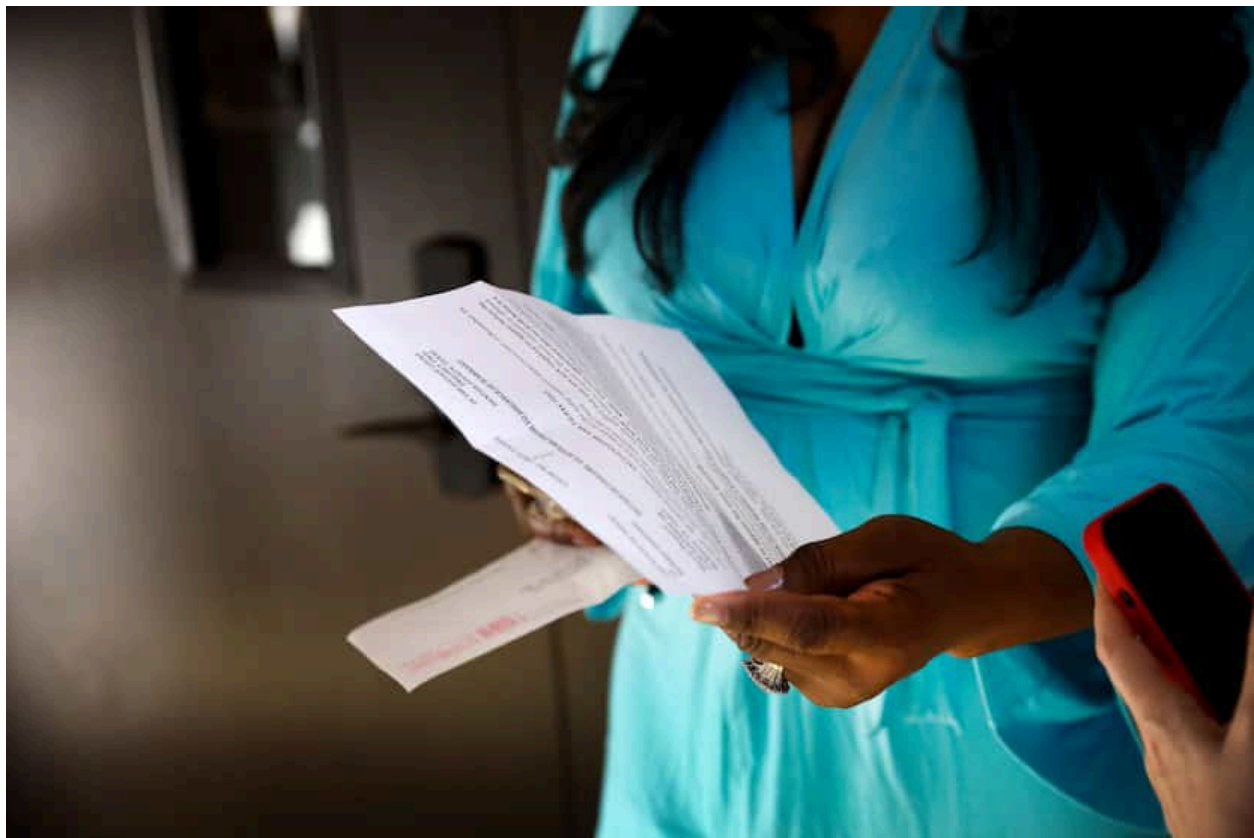
His alleged crime? A total of \$272 in unpaid tolls.

Morris Shepard happens to live in Texas, where there is little mercy for those who fail to pay toll fees, even if, like in his case, it's because of a bank account error. Texas is one of only a handful of states that criminalize toll drivers for unpaid fees and where courts regularly issue arrest warrants over the debts. It's also not uncommon for governments in cities like Dallas to [post so-called tollway offender names on](#) county websites, a yearlong *Dallas Morning News* investigation on tolls found.

On average, Texas seizes thousands of driver's licenses a year and blocks vehicle registration stickers for unpaid toll fees. A total of 226,847 motorists last year received letters that their registration renewals would be blocked by just two of the state's largest tollway authorities — the North Texas Tollway Authority in Dallas and the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority in Austin, *The News'* reporting revealed. NTTA has also impounded a handful of cars over the last 10 years.

And unlike other states, which offer discounts to drivers who frequently use tollways or for those from low-income households, most of Texas' more than two dozen toll operators offer few concessions or price cuts.

The vigorous collection practices continue even though some of the state's largest public tollway operators have amassed so much money in cash reserves they could offer millions of drivers free access to toll roads and still have enough money to pay their debts to investors, *The News'* investigation found.



LaTasha Shepard of McKinney brought the paper work that lists her military veteran husband who had NTTA tolls to be cleared before Denton County Precinct 2 Justice of the Peace James DePiazza. DePiazza sees defendants who

have had a failure to appear for tollway citations in his Frisco, Texas courtroom, February 22, 2024. (Tom Fox / Staff Photographer)

For example, the Harris County Toll Road Authority, which manages toll roads in the Houston area, is holding [\\$1 billion in unrestricted cash and investments](#) as of the fiscal year that ended Feb. 28, 2022, the most recent report available to the public. From 2019 to 2022, the authority [transferred another \\$1.06 billion in surplus toll revenues](#) to Harris County to pay for transportation-related items that did not include customer discounts, according to the [February 2022 financial statement and an independent auditor's report](#).

Other toll operators say the reserves allow them to borrow at lower interest rates to build and maintain future roads. "It's incredibly expensive," said Nancy St. Pierre, NTTA spokeswoman. "People underestimate how much that is."

In addition to reviewing audits and financial documents for the state's three largest public tollway systems for roads that were built as early as 1983, *The News'* investigation included interviews with dozens of elected officials, legal analysts, county tax assessors and court clerks. Clerks are responsible for processing tollway tickets for unpaid fines and tax assessors issue vehicle registration blocks.

The News attempted to speak with the state's three largest tollway operators, nearly two dozen justices of the peace in Dallas, Collin, Tarrant and Denton counties that handle toll tickets and state and national transportation officials. Journalists also attended court hearings and reviewed thousands of pages of documents officials sent after receiving Texas Public Information Act requests.

The investigation revealed North Texas — where the pace of construction of tollways over the past two decades has far exceeded other regions in the state — is the epicenter for criminal enforcement of unpaid tolls.

Among other findings: Citations issued by the NTTA — which oversees five toll roads, two bridges and a tunnel in Collin, Dallas, Denton and Tarrant counties — eclipse all other cases handled by some justices of the peace and municipal courts in North Texas, including evictions, debt collections and small claims disputes. To handle the backlog of cases, a Tarrant County judge told *The News* he has to pay his staff overtime.

Tarrant Co. Justice of the Peace points to lack of resources and staff to handle NTTA toll violators

Sergio L. De Leon and his staff have been deluged with toll citations, so much so that he has asked the Tarrant Co. Commissioners court for an additional clerk

Justice of the Peace Sergio De Leon showed *The News* a standing-room-only storage area filled with active cases of defendants who have not responded to notices and in a matter of weeks will have their driver's licenses suspended unless they enter a plea to clear the citations. NTTA representatives who appear in court to negotiate with defendants have been so overwhelmed by the number of citations that key evidence is sometimes left out of court files, according to a Dallas attorney who shared the public files of his ticketed clients with *The News*.

The News' examination also found that the methods Texas uses to criminally charge vehicle owners may stand on shaky legal ground. The only available evidence that triggers toll fees is a

photo of a vehicle's license plate traveling a toll road. Prosecutors can't legally meet the burden of proof necessary in a criminal case with just a photo of a vehicle, several legal experts said.

Under criminal law, evidence must support convicting someone without any doubt that they acted illegally. If there isn't proof to show who was driving, there isn't enough evidence to convict, they said. In 2019, the Texas Legislature voted overwhelmingly to ban red-light cameras because of similar concerns.

"You have to prove in a criminal case beyond a reasonable doubt that a person drove a vehicle through without paying a toll," said Lisa Foster, a retired California superior court judge who is now co-director of the Fines and Fees Justice Center, an organization that works to ensure fines are equitably imposed and enforced. "You can't prosecute a car, you have to prosecute people for doing things illegally."

It's unclear whether people are ever given a chance to dispute registration blocks on their vehicles, *The News* found. While state law spells out a person's right to request a court hearing over a registration block no later than 30 days after they are notified, the NTTA said only two people have set a hearing since it began collecting tolls. However, an attorney in Dallas who defends people for toll citations provided *The News* with documents supporting 20 requests he sent to NTTA that went unanswered.

Yet another dilemma that affects many drivers across the state is ensuring people are aware of the toll rates and penalties they are charged. *The News*' investigation found some people are routinely surprised by penalties. Sometimes, they occur because drivers don't know their credit cards stored with the tollway authority have expired, the investigation found. Other times, it's because someone sold the vehicle but didn't notify the state about the sale. NTTA said it sends notifications to anyone who opts into their alerts. State lawmakers passed a law last year that now requires tollway operators to notify drivers if the payment methods they link to their NTTA accounts have expired.

Still, the notification efforts haven't helped Texans like Morris Shepard who, to date, has spent countless hours trying to resolve his issue with NTTA, which pursued him for unpaid tolls when it could not withdraw money from his bank account. His account was frozen suddenly because of potential fraud, he said. Shepard, like so many other drivers *The News* interviewed, still ended up in court.

The News also found that toll enforcement across North Texas overwhelmingly impacts people of color and those who live in low- to moderate-income communities.

The News analyzed 10 years of data, from 2013 to 2023, for roughly 160,000 tickets issued across the state for failure to pay tolls. The analysis found nearly 40% of defendants were African American drivers like the Shepards, or Fort Worth single mother Dee Davis, who owed \$17,200 in tolls and penalties, even though Black people make up only 13% of active license holders in Texas. The analysis was based on data provided by municipal and justice of the peace courts under a voluntary reporting program of the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Tollway operators acknowledged that their systems make mistakes. NTTA, for example, processes close to 3 million transactions a day, St. Pierre said. Most are undisputed. But when there's an error, NTTA corrects it, she said.

The CTRMA in Austin also “strives for fairness” and will dismiss charges if it is proven that its technology or processes were at fault, said spokeswoman Jori Lui.

Bottom line: Taking a toll road is optional, operators said.

“If you don’t like the amount you’re being charged, whether it’s on our roads or any other, don’t do it,” St. Pierre said.

How it started

The collection concerns held by so many people *The News* spoke to didn’t always exist.

That’s because toll fee collection used to be far simpler.

Those born before 1989 may remember throwing a few quarters in a large bin and waiting for a guard rail to rise as you made it through a toll road. If you didn’t have the exact amount, you drove to an attended booth for change.

Back then, payment was guaranteed because drivers were forced to stop at a toll plaza to pay or toss money into a catch basket, [said Mark Muriello, director of policy and government affairs](#) at the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association, a Washington, D.C.-based worldwide association for the owners and operators of toll facilities.

In 1989, North Texas was among the first communities in the country to contract with a company to manage an automatic cash payment system for tolls, according to news reports.

While the changes created a need for more technology, it made the process more efficient, Muriello said. There were fewer accidents because drivers no longer had to merge into traffic after leaving toll plazas, he said.

By 2009, electronic toll tags largely ended cash-pay tolling. That’s when drivers started mounting electronic tags they received from tollway operators to their car’s front mirrors. The tags contained microchips that connected to prepaid toll accounts that drivers set up online. Now, each time a driver enters a tollway, an electronic reader above the toll road scans the microchip inside the tag and a toll fee is debited from the driver’s account.

For drivers who don’t have toll tags, an image of their license plate is taken and the tollway operator uses it to scan Department of Motor Vehicles records for the car’s registered owner. Tollway operators then send a bill to the name listed on the DMV’s website as the owner.

The big squeeze

While technology made it easier for drivers to use toll roads, it made it harder for toll operators to collect fees for people without toll tags.

So NTTA doubled down. By 2010, NTTA began keeping records of vehicle owners who did not have toll tags and frequently used a toll without paying. It slapped these drivers with fees and penalties, which sometimes added another 80% to their toll costs, according to articles from *The News* at the time. Two years later, it created [a “Top Violators” webpage](#) that contained [the names of individuals who owed money for more than 100 outstanding tolls](#). In a 2012 news release, NTTA said the list was designed to provide the public with a way to easily determine if they owed a significant debt and put them on notice that they may be subject to collections lawsuits and other enforcement actions.

Over the next few years, NTTA published additional lists for what it described as “deadbeats.” The authority sued those who wound up on this list in justice of the peace courts throughout North Texas, *News* articles show. CTRMA, which oversees six toll roads in the Austin area, also refers cases to justice of the peace courts, a CTRMA spokeswoman said in an email in response to questions from *The News*.

By 2013, a new state law gave toll operators another tool to penalize those with unpaid toll fees: the power to impound vehicles and block vehicle registrations. The registration blocks are allowed in about a dozen states, but lawmakers in states like [Oklahoma](#) want to stop them, according to news reports.

To help them more effectively pursue offenders, NTTA and the state’s two other public toll operators for nearly two decades also have relied on help from debt collection attorneys and hired high-profile law firms to represent them. NTTA also does this work for others. Private tollway operators pay NTTA to pursue drivers with unpaid toll bills in North Texas justice of the peace courts.

From 2018 to 2023, HCTRA paid \$30 million in collection attorney fees in addition to \$20 million to Austin law firm Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson to pursue other remedies such as registration blocks and driver’s license suspensions on toll evaders, according to records *The News* obtained from the Houston-area toll operator under the Texas Public Information Act.

From May 2022 to May 2023, NTTA sent nearly 172,000 scofflaw requests to Texas DPS for habitual violator statuses. The designation, which applies to a driver who has accumulated 100 or more unpaid tolls within 12 months, triggers vehicle registration blocks in Dallas, Denton, Tarrant and Collin counties. From July 2022 to July 2023, NTTA collected \$153 million in toll enforcement remedies, records show.

In total, based on those figures, North Texas counties have lost more than \$10.3 million in registration fees that their city leaders cannot collect because of vehicle blocks by toll operators, based on the average cost to register each vehicle, which is \$60 in Texas.

Collin County Tax Assessor Kenneth Maun told *The News* he refused to enforce the blocks toll operators like NTTA requested for more than a decade.

“I would find them tremendously out of date, items being billed to taxpayers who didn’t know it,” he said. “The car had already been sold one or two times. And, they (NTTA) didn’t clean anything up.”

“I wasn’t going to touch them (NTTA) because I thought they were doing a horrible job, that was for the counties, for the taxpayers, for everybody,” he said.

He finally relented around 2017, he said, when county commissioners included in the county budget three additional full-time positions to help with the workload. But years later, he said not much has changed. Billing errors for NTTA customers still exist, he said.

“I don’t respect their administrative abilities,” Maun said.

The chaos and confusion

Many of the concerns Maun described impact drivers in courts across North Texas every day, *The News’* investigation revealed.

In a Frisco courtroom in February, Justice of Peace James DePiazza prepared to issue arrest warrants for people who had failed to respond to his court notices for unpaid toll fees.

He looked up at rows of empty seats. Four of the five people sitting there that morning said they had addressed their citations with NTTA. They wondered why they still received court notices.

DePiazza, who serves in Precinct 2 in Denton County, told *The News* much of his job is spent explaining to the public how the system works. On that day, he shared from his bench that even if a driver contacts NTTA to address unpaid tolls, they must still enter a plea to address the criminal side of the infraction with the court.

DePiazza scheduled two pretrial hearings for people who pleaded not guilty with the Denton County district attorney's office in his court that day. One hearing was for a man who told DePiazza the NTTA had dismissed his charges in a bankruptcy he filed in 2021. Another hearing was for a man who said he had sold his car before the citation occurred. DePiazza told the man he needed to file a vehicle transfer notification within 30 days of the sale in order to clear the court citation.

"NTTA can come back and charge you for those tolls" if the buyer doesn't register the vehicle or he does not file the transfer notice within 30 days of the sale, DePiazza told him.

Then, DePiazza heard his final case that day — and quickly dismissed it.

Seventy-six-year-old grandmother Andrea Peralta of Lewisville had loaned her car to her grandson, she said. She was on a breathing machine because she caught COVID-19 in 2021 and it damaged her lungs, she said, so she needed to get back home as soon as possible.

"He took off and I guess left me holding the bag," she said about her grandson.

DePiazza waived court fines after Peralta showed him she was on Social Security. Peralta said she wasn't sure how much she owed NTTA, but she sold her car for \$300 more than a year ago because she couldn't afford to fix it.

She couldn't remember the exact date, though.

"It's been a while," she said.

Jeffrey Beltz, an attorney who represents people at court hearings over unpaid toll fines, said too often, NTTA representatives do not provide enough evidence to prove a driver is guilty.

The News met Beltz last summer as he waited alone one day in Justice of Peace Sara Martinez's Dallas court. NTTA representatives were supposed to attend the court hearing to prove his client's toll violation, but the court postponed the hearing. Beltz's client was on the hook for \$380.01 in unpaid tolls in addition to \$525 in administrative fees from NTTA, according to a court citation record he shared with *The News*.

His client's paperwork included the information that noted the total amount of unpaid tolls owed, but not a breakdown of each tollway violation his client allegedly had incurred. There was no way his client could verify the charges, he said. The documents also did not include snapshots from NTTA of the license plate involved in the toll violations.

“If you’re filing a criminal case, how in the world can you sit there with a straight face and say this is enough evidence?” Beltz said. “These are criminal cases and they require the highest burden of proof in the land.”

NTTA also has not responded to requests he has made for hearings to contest blocks on car registrations, Beltz said.

NTTA told *The News* only two drivers have ever set a hearing to contest a registration block and in each of those cases, the court affirmed the block.

What’s more, NTTA simply follows the law, St. Pierre said.

“If your car is used in the commission of a crime, it’s your car,” she said. “There is a degree of responsibility that comes with owning a vehicle whether it’s paying tolls or making the car payment or keeping it insured.”

A closer look

Between 2013 and 2023, roughly 146,000 of the 160,000 court tickets sent out for violations across the state for unpaid toll violations were concentrated in Tarrant, Dallas, Denton and Collin counties, where NTTA operates, according to data *The News* reviewed from DPS.

The News called and emailed the state’s three largest toll road operators, HCTRA, CTRMA and NTTA.

Only NTTA agreed to an interview.

When presented with *The News*’ findings about the actions it takes to punish violators, NTTA officials said it operates fairly.

If a driver is concerned about affordability, there are alternative routes that might better fit their budget, St. Pierre said.

“We’re being asked, ‘Why aren’t you being fair to them?’ when my first question is, ‘Well they used the toll roads, why would they not pay for what they got?’ ”

At the end of the day, St. Pierre said, “We just want what’s owed for using the road.”

Dee Davis, the Fort Worth single mom, was hoping a phone call to NTTA to explain her situation would resolve her \$17,200 toll bill. But their answer surprised her. She was told that the only payment plan they would accept was at least \$300 a month.

Several years ago, her ex-boyfriend used to borrow her car, often driving it on toll roads to get to work. She had never driven on toll roads. She guesses that he must have hidden the tollway citations from her, or maybe they had been sent to an old address where they lived before their breakup.

This year, she said she’s already been stopped by police five times on her way home from work for an expired registration sticker. NTTA blocked her from renewing her car registration because she is a habitual violator. The status gives NTTA the authority to suspend drivers’ licenses, bar those drivers from using their tollways and impound their cars.



Dee Davis's ex-boyfriend borrowed her car and ran up \$10,000 in tolls and now she has a bill over \$17,000. She cannot afford to pay and has had her car registration pulled. She runs the risk of being jailed and her car impounded. She is pictured in her car in Fort Worth, July 28, 2023.(Tom Fox / Staff Photographer)

Many habitual violators are everyday Texans working to make ends meet, two judges said in interviews with *The News*. They are hair stylists, bartenders, deployed military, single parents and grandmothers. They are small business owners and construction workers. Some mistakenly get on a tollway and don't realize how quickly the fees add up, judges said. One hundred charges can happen in a few weeks for a driver who passes several stations on a toll road to get to work and back every day.

Morris Shepard had a toll tag on his car. For years, money was automatically withdrawn from his bank account to pay for his drives on toll roads. But when his bank account was frozen to protect him after Amazon found potentially fraudulent activity, his bank declined his toll payments. The Shepards said they never received notice from NTTA that toll payments could not be withdrawn.

They visited an NTTA office in Plano in February after receiving a letter from Denton County Justice of the Peace Precinct 2 that said Morris Shepard could be arrested for unpaid tolls. They said they were surprised after they explained their situation that NTTA still told them they had to go to court.

Because he's a disabled military veteran, Morris Shepard is eligible to drive for free on some Texas toll roads under qualifying discount programs accepted by TxDOT and Austin's regional mobility authority. NTTA only waives tolls for Legion of Valor members under a program that is subsidized by an anonymous third-party sponsor.

In court that February morning, the judge set Morris Shepard's next hearing for 9 a.m. on April 11, when he and his wife said they would have in hand documented proof of the fraudulent activity on their bank account.

But the case did not end that day. And it didn't matter that he had documents to show that he had not intentionally tried to avoid paying tolls.

At the April 11 hearing, an assistant district attorney with Denton County told Shepard he must still pay the toll fees he owes NTTA.

Shepard also learned he would receive an email with a Zoom link for an upcoming meeting to work out a payment plan with NTTA representatives. After that, he needed to bring to the court documented proof of his agreement with NTTA and pay \$81 in court costs. Shepard's ticket for unpaid tolls would be removed from his record if he did not receive another citation in the next 90 days.

In the hallway after the April hearing, Shepard said he was glad his court fees and fines were reduced. He could have been ordered to pay as much as \$331 but the Precinct 2 court reduces fines to incentivize people to clear their citations.

His wife was still upset that despite their proof and talk with NTTA, they still had to go to court and pay toll penalties.

"You get the runaround," LaTasha Shepard said. "You had to go there first, and then you've got to come back here. You've got to do all this stuff."

"This is a redundant process," she said.

Part 3: As Texas prepares for more growth, lawmakers may soon look for ways to lessen the burden of tolls. In North Texas, one judge slashes fines to "help people take care of their business." Penalties don't have to be extreme, he says. Meanwhile, some states offer rebates and discounts to low-income families and frequent users.

WANT TO GO FASTER ON NORTH TEXAS TOLL ROADS? GET OUT YOUR WALLET

Supporters say motorists have a choice between driving on toll lanes or free roads, but critics say it's not about choice, it's about affordability.

By Yamil Berard
May 13, 2024

Each day, a sleepless traffic computer watches millions of moving cars on North Texas roads, gathering real-time information on the driving patterns of Texas motorists and how frequently they choose to pay for tollways.

Why This Story Matters

Millions of Texans rely on toll roads daily in a state that has built more paid thoroughfares over the past two decades than almost all U.S. states combined. The affordability, safety and management of these roads impact us all, especially as some leaders admit more are likely coming to handle substantial growth throughout the state and in North Texas.

The technology, run by various tollway operators, is part of a highway system of more than 100 miles of roadways that function as [“managed lanes,”](#) known as [TEXpress in North Texas](#). In other parts of the state, these lanes run along Austin’s 11-mile express roadway called MoPac. In Harris County, they are part of a 6-mile stretch of Interstate 10 and are known as the Inner Katy Managed Lanes.

The managed lanes work like a freeway inside a freeway because they are separate from the free lanes. They also have fewer exits.

Many motorists hop on [TEXpress lanes](#) to connect quickly to urban centers from their suburban homes. The lanes on Interstate 820, State Highway 121 and Interstate 35W offer access between the Hurst-Euless-Bedford area and downtown Fort Worth. In the Dallas area, LBJ TEXpress brings commuters who live in Coppell and Farmers Branch to their jobs in and around North Dallas.

The goal is to keep traffic moving at least 50 miles per hour under the managed lanes’ system of “dynamic pricing,” transportation officials said. In these lanes, the fees change frequently based on the level of congestion in their neighboring free lanes.

Without the managed lanes, the drive between Dallas and Fort Worth would be a lot more frustrating, said Michael Morris, the regional planner for North Texas’ 12-county metropolitan planning organization. In a 2023 [traffic index study that ranked U.S. cities by levels of congestion and travel times](#), Dallas-Fort Worth ranked lower than Austin and Houston.

“We added 2 million people and our congestion levels barely changed,” Morris said.

Motorists also have a choice between driving on the managed toll lanes or the free ones. However, critics say it’s not about choice, it’s about affordability.

Video: How Texas’ explosive growth led to a toll-building spree

Investigative Reporter Yamil Berard breaks down the affordability, safety and management of toll roads throughout the state and in North Texas.

Yonah Freemark, a senior research associate at the Washington, D.C.-based Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center at the Urban Institute, which studies traffic patterns and other related issues, said it's common for transportation engineers to say things like, "We're charging people based on their willingness to pay."

So, if you really want to get to Fort Worth from Dallas in a specific period of time, you would be willing to pay \$20 or whatever it costs, said Freemark, who has master's degrees in city planning and transportation, as well as a PhD in urban studies from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Related: [Toll road fees can be unpredictable in Texas. This driver prefers traffic over paying](#)

"If you are super rich, \$20 is nothing to you," said Freemark. "But if you're poor, \$20 is a massive amount. And so the use of toll roads is very much about creating a system of transportation that is reliable for people who have the ability to pay the toll cost."

North Texas' managed lanes include:

- NTE TEXpress — Interstate 820, State Highway 183/State Highway 121 and Interstate 35W in Tarrant County
- LBJ TEXpress — Interstate 635 in Dallas County
- Interstate 30 TEXpress in Dallas County
- Interstate 35E TEXpress in Dallas and Denton counties
- State Highway 114 TEXpress in Dallas and Tarrant counties
- State Highway 183 TEXpress in Dallas and Tarrant counties
- Loop 12 TEXpress in Dallas County
- Interstate 635E TEXpress in Dallas County (expected to open in late 2024)

(Source: Texas Department of Transportation)

TEXAS TOPS NATION IN HUNGER CRISIS, NORTH TEXAS FOOD BANK SERVES FOURTH-LARGEST AREA ACCORDING TO NEW FEEDING AMERICA STUDY

Nearly 5 million people face hunger in Texas, and an estimated 777,690 people in the North Texas Food Bank service area – more than one-third are children.

By North Texas Food Bank
May 15, 2024

DALLAS, TX, May 15, 2024 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- At its annual Mayor Day event, the [North Texas Food Bank](#) (NTFB) unveiled the latest insights from [Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap](#) study, revealing Texas' stark reality: it now leads the nation in food insecurity, surpassing California. Texas grapples with a food insecurity rate of 16.4%, equating to nearly 5 million individuals facing hunger, a significant increase from 2021. Alarming, over one-third of those affected are children.

Moreover, the study highlights the ongoing challenges within NTFB's 13-county service area, ranking it as the nation's fourth-largest area of food insecurity. Approximately 777,690 individuals, or 1 in 8 people, confront food insecurity within NTFB's service area, with children bearing a disproportionate burden. The rate of child food insecurity surged to 20.8%, reflecting a distressing rise from the previous year.

"While Texas boasts of being bigger in many aspects, leading the nation in food insecurity is not a badge of honor we can proudly wear," said Trisha Cunningham, President and CEO of the North Texas Food Bank. "In the heart of North Texas, where the number of people facing hunger is greater than the populations of cities like Seattle or San Francisco, the statistic that strikes hardest is nearly 40% of those in need are children, and that is just unacceptable. Yet, amid these struggles, the North Texas Food Bank is committed to closing the hunger gap in North Texas through the dedication of generous supporters and steadfast partnerships."

Map the Meal Gap is the only study providing local-level estimates of food insecurity and costs for every county and congressional district. The study builds upon the USDA's latest national and state data report, which showed a sharp increase in food insecurity in 2022 amid historically high food prices and the expiration of many pandemic-era programs. *Map the Meal Gap* emphasizes the urgent call to take action.

Key findings of Map the Meal Gap include:

- Texas has a food insecurity rate of 16.4% or 1 in 6, with nearly 5 million people facing hunger, up from 13.7% in 2021.
- Texas has 1,697,870 children facing hunger with a food insecurity rate of 22.8% or 1 in 4, up from 18% in 2021.
- NTFB's 13-county service area continues to have the fourth-highest number of people facing hunger in the nation, with a food insecurity rate of 14.2%, up from 11.9% in 2021.
- An estimated 777,690, or 1 in 8 people, face food insecurity in NTFB's service area.

- NTFB has a child food insecurity rate of 20.8%, with 286,860 children, or 1 in 5, up from 15.8% in 2021.
- There continue to be disparities in who faces hunger. In the NTFB service area:
 - 1 in 4 (28%) Black persons are food insecure, up from 1 in 5 (22%) in 2021.
 - 1 in 5 (20%) Hispanic persons, up from 1 in 7 (14%) in 2021.
 - 1 in 11 (9%) White, non-Hispanic persons, up from 1 in 14 (7%) in 2021.
- The estimated annual meal gap for NTFB’s service area is more than 146 million, compared with nearly 113 million in 2021.
- In NTFB’s service area, 51% of those facing hunger have a family income under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) threshold.
- *Map the Meal Gap* data estimates the cost per meal for those living in NTFB’s service area is \$3.83, up from \$3.37 in 2021.
- Dallas County has 52% of NTFB’s food-insecure population, followed by Collin County, which has 17%; Denton County, which has 15%; and the remaining 10 counties, which have 16%.

Food Insecurity by County in North Texas Food Bank’s Service Area

County	2021 Food Insecurity Rate	2022 Food Insecurity Rate	2021 # of Food Insecure	2022 # of Food Insecure	2021 Child Food Insecurity Rate	2022 Child Food Insecurity Rate	2021 # of Children Food Insecure	2022 # of Children Food Insecure
Collin	10.1 %	12.1 %	105,320	130,740	10.2 %	14.7 %	27,330	40,060
Dallas	13.1 %	15.6 %	340,260	406,340	19.8 %	25.0 %	134,560	166,590
Delta	15.1 %	16.1 %	790	850	19.6 %	24.2 %	250	290
Denton*	10.2 %	12.5 %	90,550	114,180	10.9 %	15.7 %	23,620	34,320

Ellis	10.4 %	13.1 %	19,5 80	25,5 40	14.0 %	19.4 %	7,0 60	9,9 70
Fannin	13.8 %	16.1 %	4,8 80	5,7 90	15.9 %	21.5 %	1,2 00	1,6 40
Grayson	13.7 %	15.7 %	18,3 50	21,5 70	17.3 %	22.7 %	5,5 70	7,3 90
Hopkins	13.6 %	16.4 %	4,9 70	6,0 50	16.5 %	22.8 %	1,5 00	2,0 50
Hunt	14.2 %	16.2 %	14,0 60	16,4 70	18.0 %	23.1 %	4,2 90	5,5 80
Kaufman	10.8 %	13.3 %	15,1 90	19,9 20	14.6 %	19.7 %	5,7 50	8,3 10
Lamar	16.4 %	18.1 %	8,1 80	9,0 70	22.6 %	28.4 %	2,7 10	3,4 00
Navarro	14.4 %	17.9 %	7,4 50	9,4 40	18.7 %	25.4 %	2,5 70	3,4 30
Rockwall	8.3% %	10.6 %	8,7 60	11,7 30	9.0% %	13.0 %	2,5 60	3,8 30

Show less

*Denton County service is shared with Tarrant Area Food Bank – each responsible for 50%

NTFB's current strategic plan addresses this elevated need by providing Food for Today and Hope for Tomorrow. In FY22, NTFB provided access to nearly 137 million nutritious meals, and an additional 144 million meals in FY23 by maximizing food distribution through members of its feeding network. Through partnerships with over 500 food pantries and organizations, NTFB endeavors to meet the diverse needs of individuals across its service area. Together with its redistribution partners, Crossroads Community Services in South Dallas and Sharing Life in Mesquite, NTFB provides daily access to about 400,000 meals.

With 90 percent of the food being distributed through this feeding network, NTFB believes investing in its feeding partners will ultimately transform the lives of its neighbors. Thanks to donors' generosity, the NTFB awarded more than \$6 million in grants to nearly 70 partner

agencies last year. These grants helped community organizations in NTFB's feeding network to add or repair refrigeration, expand their food pantries, purchase trucks for the transportation of food, and establish or expand wraparound services such as vocational and financial literacy classes.

Understanding where neighbors facing hunger live is critical so that NTFB can work to ensure they have access to food. The food bank uses the Feeding America data and the Hunger Action Map, a comprehensive report developed in partnership with Bain Consulting, to look at regional demographic information and work with its Partner Network to distribute food in zip codes with high unmet needs. For example, in Dallas County, 18% of the people facing hunger reside in 10 South and Southern Dallas zip codes. Last year, NTFB provided approximately 20 million meals to residents living in those 10 zip codes through 160 feeding programs and partners like Crossroads Community Services, serving as a distribution hub and nearly \$1 million in grants that directly impacted feeding partners serving those communities.

NTFB's Hope for Tomorrow strategy focuses on building more connected, self-sufficient, food-secure communities by addressing the underlying factors that lead to food insecurity. NTFB is adding food in places where neighbors are already utilizing healthcare or other services and supporting partners as they provide financial empowerment, workforce development, and other resources. The food bank is also continuing to build its Nutrition Services to empower neighbors to make healthy choices.

NTFB's Social Service Assistance team also helps low-income families apply for programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In Texas, SNAP, formerly known as "food stamps," is a crucial resource for 3.7 million low-income Texans who rely on it to help feed their families. One out of every nine Texans receives SNAP benefits. Still, only seven out of 10 eligible Texans are enrolled in SNAP, one of the country's lowest participation rates.

Policy and advocacy play pivotal roles in addressing the multifaceted issue of food insecurity. As 44% of the meals that NTFB provided access to last year were tied to government programs, advocating for policies that seek to close the hunger gap at the federal, state, and local levels is critical to providing sustainable solutions to food insecurity. Through well-crafted policies, governments can implement structural changes that bolster food security by ensuring equitable access to the nutritious food and resources needed to thrive.

Cunningham concluded, "Empowered by the unwavering support of our community, the North Texas Food Bank stands as a beacon in the fight against hunger. With every donation of food, funds, and time, we fortify our mission and extend our reach. Together, with our dedicated partners and volunteers, we form a lifeline of compassion, delivering hope and sustenance to those in need. In unity, we nourish not just bodies, but spirits, overcoming barriers to food security one meal at a time."

To learn how food insecurity impacts your community, visit FeedingAmerica.org/MaptheMealGap. For more information about the North Texas Food Bank and how to help end hunger in North Texas, visit www.ntfb.org.

###

About the North Texas Food Bank:

The North Texas Food Bank (NTFB) is a top-ranked non-profit hunger relief organization that sources, packages, and distributes food through a network of about 500 Partner Agencies and organizations across 13 North Texas counties. The organization also provides food to children, seniors and families through various direct-delivery programs, including mobile pantries.

In its last fiscal year, the NTFB provided access to more than 144 million nutritious meals or nearly 400,000 meals daily, a 5% percent increase over the prior year. The North Texas Food Bank is designated a 4-Star Exceptional organization by Charity Navigator based on its governance, integrity and financial stability, and is ranked 89th on Forbes 2023 Top 100 Charities in America. NTFB is a Partner Food Bank of Feeding America, the nation's largest hunger-relief organization. For more information, www.ntfb.org.

About Feeding America

Feeding America® is the largest hunger relief organization in the United States. As a network of more than 200 food banks, 21 statewide food bank associations, and over 60,000 agency partners, including food pantries and meal programs, we helped provide 5.2 billion meals to tens of millions of people in need last year. Feeding America also supports programs that prevent food waste and improve food security among the people we serve; brings attention to the social and systemic barriers that contribute to food insecurity in our nation; and advocates for legislation that protects people from going hungry. Visit www.FeedingAmerica.org, find us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

COLLEYVILLE ZONING COMMISSION WANTS TO ALLOW HELIPORTS, HELIPADS WITHIN CITY LIMIT

By Cecilia Lenzen

May 16, 2024



Colleyville could soon allow the construction of heliports, helipads and drone delivery hubs within city limits.

The city's Zoning Commission approved an [amendment](#) to Colleyville's [land development code](#) that could streamline future development opportunities such as commercial drone use. The amendment is still subject to City Council approval.

Community Development Director Ben Bryner said at a May 13 [zoning meeting](#) that the impetus for the amendment was North Richland Hills' recent approval of [Walmart drone delivery](#). He anticipates similar requests for commercial drone use in Colleyville and believes the city should be forward-thinking and set regulations now.

"This is a very proactive move," Zoning Commissioner Jerome Obinabo said at the meeting. "At some point, we have to think ahead, and this could be great for the city of Colleyville in the future."

The city does not currently have any active applications for helicopter or drone use, but commissioners repeatedly said they want to get ahead on establishing baseline standards for this type of land use.

With the zoning change, future applicants would still need to obtain a special-use permit from the city. Construction of heliports, airports and commercial drone delivery hubs would only be allowed on approved site plans, according to a city staff presentation. Drone hubs would not be allowed within 150 feet of residential properties.

What is the difference between a heliport and helipad?

- A heliport is a fixed-base operation that provides a range of services, including customs, maintenance, fuel bunkering and fire suppression. Heliports are typically found at airports.
- A helipad is a designated area where a helicopter can land safely. Helipads are usually found at hotels, private residences or hospitals.

The zoning amendment comes months after Colleyville received two separate applications for helicopter use. The applicants [pulled their applications](#) in December, following community pushback.

At the May 13 meeting, a handful of residents expressed concerns about drone or helicopter use near private homes.

Colleyville resident Cynthia Phillips told the Report she's concerned about helicopter use disrupting the tranquility of Colleyville's residential neighborhoods. She said she's open to drone use, but wants to see it strictly regulated with clear guidelines on how to handle violations.

"I'm just trying to protect the settled expectations that myself and others had when we moved here," Phillips said. "People in this area get very up in arms when someone messes with our homes."

Zoning Commissioner David Groves acknowledged residents' concerns about aerial vehicles in neighborhoods, but clarified that any would-be drone or helicopter users would still need the city's permission to build heliports or helipads. If approved, Federal Aviation Administration flight regulations would apply to all flights.

"This just regulates what they can do on the land. We can't regulate what they do in the air," Groves said. "I think this gives us enough control."

City Council is expected to consider the proposed zoning amendment at its [June 4](#) meeting. When the meeting agenda is posted, it will be available [here](#).

NBC5DFW

FORT WORTH STREETS IDENTIFIED AS DANGEROUS YEARS AGO ARE STILL AMONG THE MOST DEADLY: NBC 5 INVESTIGATES

Residents in one far northeast Fort Worth neighborhood call on the city to install crosswalks, stop signs, traffic circles -- anything to calm speeds

By Scott Friedman, Eva Parks, Edward Ayala and Frank Heinz
May 15, 2024

An analysis of crash records by **NBC 5 Investigates** found that some of the deadliest streets for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists in Fort Worth are the same ones identified in a safety study done four years ago. As Fort Worth ramps up its Vision Zero plan to reduce traffic deaths on city streets, we asked what will be done to address troublesome locations, years after they were first marked as danger zones.

In far northeast Fort Worth, a picture showing where a car crashed through a playground fence captures the frustrations of families who say something needs to be done to slow drivers along Park Vista Boulevard.



"It's almost to the point that our residents are losing faith in the city," said Chad Pack, president of the Woodland Springs HOA.

Get DFW local news, weather forecasts and entertainment stories to your inbox. [Sign up for NBC DFW newsletters.](#)

Pack reached out to **NBC 5 Investigates** saying his neighborhood has been asking the city for crosswalks, stop signs, stop lights, and traffic circles -- anything to calm the speeds along the divided, four-lane road. But as months passed with no action taken, some in the neighborhood

wondered if the city was serious about its commitment to "Vision Zero," a program designed to help cities reduce traffic injuries and deaths.

"If they really were interested in having it at zero fatalities and zero accidents, we wouldn't have to be begging for them to put these items in. They would be taking care of it," said Martina Worley, a Fort Worth resident who is a member of the Woodland Springs HOA.

A portion of Park Vista was flagged in a city safety study four years ago as one of the worst locations for crashes involving bicycles.

Chelsea St. Louis, with the Fort Worth Transportation Department, said the concerns voiced by residents are being heard and said the city has "implemented improvements on Park Vista, especially at some of our pedestrian crossings" and that they "continue to look at what transportation needs are."

In interviews, city transportation officials told **NBC 5 Investigates** they recently restriped portions of Park Vista Boulevard to narrow traffic lanes and slow speeds. They said they made other improvements, too, at an intersection where a child was recently injured by a car while crossing the street.

In February 2024, the city announced it was working on a new Vision Zero action plan.

"As part of this Vision Zero action plan, part of what we're going to be doing is addressing these speeding concerns," St. Louis said during the February announcement.

The speeding concerns are something the city has discussed since 2019 when the City Council first passed a resolution supporting Vision Zero.

Kelly Porter, the assistant transportation director for the city of Fort Worth, said the city's next step is to map out the "High Injury Network," a map showing the streets with the highest numbers of serious crashes.

Records obtained by **NBC 5 Investigates** however show the city has already done a high-injury network study once before, in 2020.

According to our analysis of crash data from the Texas Department of Transportation, **NBC 5 Investigates** discovered some of the most dangerous streets identified four years ago continue to be among the most dangerous streets in 2024. A finding that raises questions about the city's Vision Zero progress in recent years.

For example, on McCart Avenue, three stretches of the roadway were ranked among the Top 6 on the city's high injury list in 2019. New data we analyzed suggested it may now be the most deadly street in the city with 15 crashes that killed 17 people between 2019-2024.

McCart Avenue may now be the most deadly street in Fort Worth with 15 crashes that killed 17 people between 2019-2024.

NBC 5 Investigates asked Porter if he was concerned things may have gotten worse, and not better, in the last five years since the city adopted Vision Zero.

"When you say five years, you're talking also through a pandemic, and driving behavior really got pretty serious during the pandemic," Porter said. "That slowed a lot of our progress down on things we saw before the pandemic."

Despite the pandemic, the city has made some progress on McCart Avenue.



Vision Zero work is being done at the intersection of McCart Avenue and Altamesa Boulevard.

Martin Phillips, who is also an assistant transportation director for the city of Fort Worth, said they are working to make the intersection at McCart Avenue and Altamesa Boulevard safer for drivers and pedestrians.

Phillips showed us one Vision Zero project currently underway at the intersection where new turn lanes and crosswalks are being installed.

The goal, Phillips agreed, would be to look back at the statistics in five years and see that fewer people had been injured or killed in the corridor.

Fort Worth is also in the planning stages to modernize the entire McCart Avenue corridor. However, it could be more than four years before that larger project takes shape.

"But you could also see interim improvements, such as better lighting or improved sidewalks," Porter said.

Another area that was high on the injury list in 2019, along East Berry Street, was one of the seven worst streets for pedestrian deaths. New data from the Texas Department of Transportation indicated East Berry Street is now the second-deadliest street in the city with 10 fatalities over the same five-year span.

The city said they are fast-tracking plans to address the issues on Berry Street.

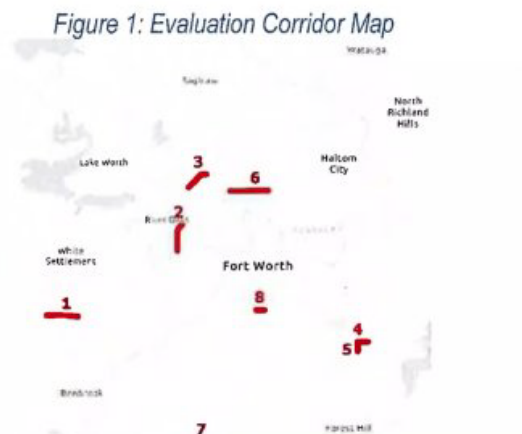
"So it's a comprehensive approach that we're actually taking. And so it's fast as local government can move. Things are happening on that corridor," Porter said.

Progress seems mixed on some other streets previously identified by the city as dangerous. In 2022, a city consultant's report recommended changes on eight high-injury corridors including along Miller Avenue and Eastland Street near Pate Park.

As mentioned in the previous section, the City of Fort Worth's 2020 High Injury Network report identified a top 10 list for each of the three high-injury networks, resulting in 30 possible corridors for the City to choose from. Some of these top 30 corridors were already identified for enhancements by the City or by TxDOT, so they were not considered for this evaluation.

Each corridor's rank on their respective HIN, as well as their location throughout the city were considered to determine eight (8) final corridors for this initial evaluation. Preference was given to corridors based on their HIN ranking and location (to ensure maximum benefit citywide). The corridors identified for evaluation can be viewed in **Figure 1** and include the following:

1. **Camp Bowie West Boulevard** from Renzel Boulevard to Boston Avenue
2. **Isbell Road** from White Settlement Road to Ohio Garden Road
3. **Long Avenue** from Azle Avenue to Angle Avenue
4. **Eastland Street** from Miller Avenue to Edgewood Terrace
5. **Miller Avenue** from Eastland Street to Hardeman Street
6. **28th Street** from Clinton Street to I-35W Southbound Frontage Road (SBFR)
7. **Altamesa Boulevard** from Woodway Drive to McCart Avenue
8. **Allen Avenue** from Hemphill Street to Main Street



Some intersections on Miller Avenue have been improved, but many recommended improvements on Eastland Street have not happened, such as recommendations that crosswalks be added and curb extensions be installed to slow cars and protect pedestrians.

"If we could make all of the streets as friendly for pedestrians as possible across the entire city, that would be ideal," said Ann Zadeh, with [Community Design Fort Worth](#).

We walked Eastland with Zadeh, a former member of the Fort Worth City Council who now heads a nonprofit focused on quality-of-life issues. Zadeh said the city is trying to accelerate the pace of Vision Zero, but she wishes it would move faster to roll out smaller, quick-build solutions.

"I think low-hanging fruit could be addressed more quickly. And refreshing striping and calming. Maybe narrowing the lanes here, making the crosswalks very bold," Zadeh said.

The city is installing traffic-calming bumps in more neighborhoods and has a program now where people can request them.

Back on Park Vista Boulevard, Chad Pack is pleading for the city to fix two intersections.

"You know, our residents need the safety to be able to enjoy the parks," Pack said.

Shortly after we met with Pack's neighbors, they met with city officials who pledged to conduct traffic studies a possibly a new stoplight at one intersection. However, some question how long it will take to move from studies to solutions.

"I shouldn't have to be this scared of my kids coming to this park or walking down the street," said Worley.

NBC 5 Investigates' look at TxDOT crash data also revealed traffic deaths and injuries have increased nearly 30% in the four years since the city first mapped its most dangerous streets. So, even if we didn't mention your neighborhood in this report the numbers show how the issue affects everyone who drives in Fort Worth.

NORTH TEXAS HIGH-SPEED RAIL PLANNERS LOOK AT PRIVATE COMPANY AS ROUTE FORWARD, ROLL OUT IDEAS

By Lance Murray

May 15, 2024



High-speed rail service in Dallas-Fort Worth is still in the planning stages and will need to find a private company to build and run it, and funding to pay for it. (Courtesy image | Texas Central Partners)

Transportation planners in North Texas continue their efforts to bring high-speed rail to the area, a system that would link Dallas and Fort Worth via Arlington and push south to Houston.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments held a public meeting Monday at which its planners detailed the status of high-speed rail in the region as well as the status of efforts to control air quality problems that have affected DFW for decades.

High-speed rail could be a reality in coming years, but success requires the completion of separate high-speed rail projects designed to connect, forming a system of travel from Arlington or Fort Worth to Houston with no need to change trains.

Last year, [Texas Central Partners](#) and Amtrak announced a plan to jointly study forward motion on a long-planned high-speed rail line to Houston.

“Texas Central, a private company, has been advancing that project and, even more recently, Amtrak seems interested in joining them in that project, continuing to advance the Dallas-Houston corridor,” Council of Governments Program Manager Brendon Wheeler said at the meeting.

The Council of Governments said it is moving ahead with plans to bring high-speed rail service to the Interstate Highway 30 corridor, connecting Fort Worth and Arlington to Dallas and a planned high-speed rail line south to Houston emanating from Dallas.

Wheeler said that high-speed rail projects under review include more than just the route to Houston.

“You have a planned study that TxDOT initiated several years ago, and then COG and several other metropolitan planning authorities along the route in Austin, San Antonio and Waco all the way down to Laredo advanced even further,” he said. That route could utilize other high performance lines such as magnetic levitation, or maglev, trains and high-speed rail.

Maglev systems of rail transport are levitated by electromagnets, thus eliminating rolling resistance of wheels. It is known to reach higher speeds than high-speed rail.

“Our study would look to connect all of these projects into a single system where they’re not simply corridor based, not just going from say Dallas to Houston or forward to Austin, but you’re able to create what the Regional Transportation Council calls a ‘one seat ride,’ where you go from Fort Worth to Houston on the same train,” Wheeler said. “You don’t have to get off this and get to a new station or get to a different train. You stay on the same train.”

Wheeler said the same thing applies if you’re coming from Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin or San Antonio — you stay on the same train. But don’t expect it to become reality soon.

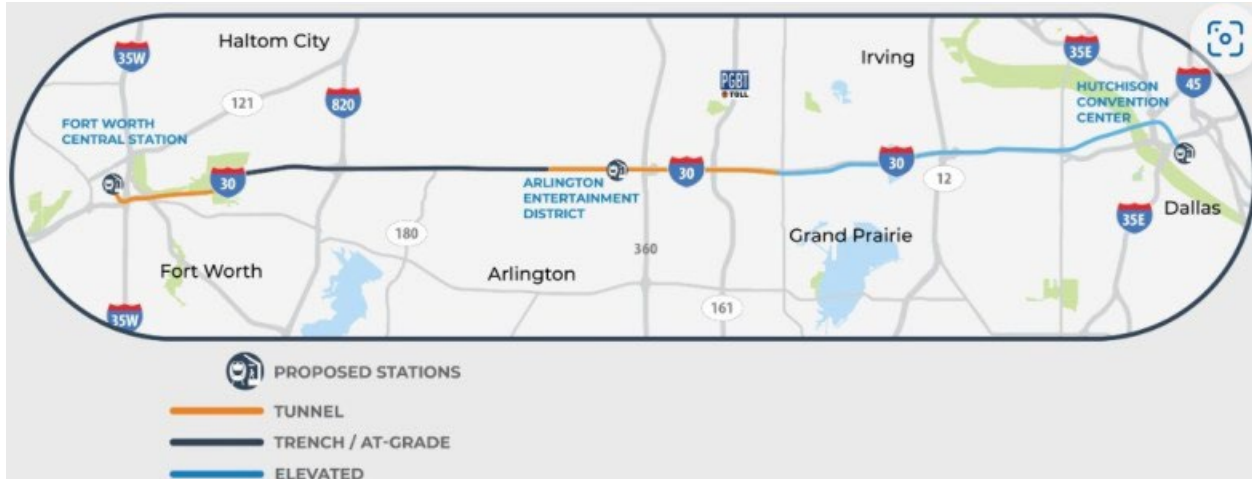
“These projects take a long time to plan, to build — decades,” Wheeler said.

The Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation Connections Study is in the National Environmental Policy Act portion of Phase 2, which focuses on route alignment, locations for possible stations, and potential social and environmental impacts. That phase began in March.

The Council of Governments said it has studied 43 potential alignments and a series of possible high-speed technologies as part of Phase 1 of the [DFW High-Speed Transportation Connections Study](#).

The agency said that high-speed rail along the I-30 corridor became the preferred method to connect potential riders from DFW to the planned Dallas-Houston route.

High-speed rail leaving Dallas toward Fort Worth would be elevated, Wheeler said, while Arlington trains would likely run in a sort of trench between the eastbound and westbound lanes of Interstate 30. The Dallas leg would be elevated in part to match the height of tracks leaving a proposed station on the western edge of downtown near Union Station.



The high-speed rail line from Dallas to Fort Worth via Arlington would follow Interstate 30. (Courtesy photo | North Central Texas Council of Governments)

“We’re not looking to disrupt the main lanes, the frontage roads or the traffic along that corridor,” Wheeler said.

He said an Arlington station would serve as a connection point to Dallas Fort Worth International Airport to the north using automated transformation systems.

Currently, plans for the Arlington station call for an underground station under I-30 near the Baird Farm Road, Stadium Drive area of the city, Senior Program Manager Dan Lamers said.

“In our current long-range transportation plan, we’ve identified this ATS, or automated transportation system, type service where you’re using automated vehicles on a dedicated guideway to be able to provide that connection between the Arlington high-speed rail station up to the TRE Centreport Station and then on to the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport,” Wheeler said.

The Council of Governments said that Dallas-Fort Worth has a population of more than 8 million people and is expected to top 11 million by 2045. It said this rapid growth creates a need for innovative transportation options to preserve and enhance the region’s quality of life.

Air Quality Planner Daniela Tower said that one important air quality standard, fine particulate matter, changed in February from 12 micrograms per cubic meter to 9 micrograms per cubic meter. Much of the region’s air quality is impacted by vehicular traffic and as the region grows that impact could grow unless measures are taken.

She said that there are three monitors in use at the moment, two in Dallas County and one in Tarrant County, and they average readings higher than that standard.

“The most populous counties we have and also the ones that have the highest potential to get into nonattainment with a new standard,” Tower said. “The three monitors we have in Kaufman, Navarro and Denton are still in attainment and are relatively far even from the 9 micrograms per cubic meter.”

She said that “special events” that generate fine particulate matter such as Saharan dust coming into the region or particles generated by fires can impact the measurements, but those can be accounted for.

“In the end, we are not being held accountable for it,” Tower said. “So these are taken out, which would bring the design value down. But for this we have to wait for data approval.”

Tower said that eventually, nonattainment of air quality standards could have an impact on the region politically and economically, but that won't be known for a while.

Senior Transportation Planner Cody Derrick also explained the importance of the Transportation Improvement Program document, which is an inventory of funded transportation projects. It's a federal- and state-mandated document that contains regionally significant projects that are funded with either federal, state or local funding sources.

Derrick said that for the four years that document covers, “We have approximately \$8.4 billion of funding across several funding commitments, and this covers our roadway and transit projects.”

He said that about \$4 billion is in federal commitments, approximately \$2 billion in state commitments, and then approximately \$900 million of transit formula commitments.

“These are specifically transit projects that are not funded with roadway or formula funds,” Derrick said. “These are transit funding, and overall we have just a little over 1,100 projects.”

He said the transportation improvement document is updated on a quarterly basis.

Why is Texas prone to flooding in the spring?

BY TIFFANI JACKSON MAY 16, 2024 2:43 PM

The wettest season of the year has arrived in Texas. Spring showers typically begin in April and May. Texas is frequently battered by storm after storm in the spring, leaving a soggy landscape with nowhere to let all the rain out.

Flooding occurs as a result. Texas' version of the water cycle frequently causes flooding because of the state's diverse terrain and location along the Gulf of Mexico. Rainfall serves as the driver of most of the events.

A Blue Ribbon Study found that Texas had 4,722 flash floods during the 14-year period from 1986 to 2000. It also found that three million of the eight million buildings constructed on floodplains lacked flood insurance.

Texas received 35 trillion gallons of rain in May 2015. The rainfall is a trifecta for Central Texas because sometimes it falls too quickly for the soil to hold it, so it flows into the closest stream.

TYPES OF FLOODING MOST COMMON IN TEXAS

Given that Texas is located in "flash flood alley," it is not shocking that more than 500 flash floods have been reported in the previous ten years. The most vulnerable time of year for flooding in Texas depends on the type of flood.

- River floods are more likely in the spring and early summer
- Flash floods are more common in the fall and spring
- Coastal floods are most frequent during hurricane season, from June to November.

Letters A or V designate locations at high risk of flooding on FEMA flood maps. High flooding is most likely to occur in these places. If you have a federally backed mortgage and own a property in a high-risk area, you must have flood insurance as a requirement of the loan. Here's where to get a map of your area.

<https://www.star-telegram.com/news/weather-news/article288529172.html#storylink=cpy>

North Texas shows little mercy for those who owe toll fees

By YAMIL BERARD and SHUYAO XIAO

Staff Writer

On a crisp February morning, LaTasha and Morris Shepard stood in front of a Denton County justice of the peace, trying to avoid jail.

A letter delivered a few weeks before to the couple's McKinney home didn't mince words: If Morris Shepard didn't show up to court, a warrant would go out for his arrest.

Morris Shepard is a disabled military veteran in his 60s who served 17 years in the Army. LaTasha, his wife, works as a legal advocate for the National Urban League. They knew they could not miss court.

His alleged crime? A total of \$272 in unpaid tolls.

Morris Shepard happens to live in Texas, where there is little mercy for those who fail to pay toll fees, even if, like in his case, it's because of a bank account error. Texas is one of only a handful of states that criminalize toll drivers for unpaid fees and where courts regularly issue arrest warrants over the debts. It's also not uncommon for governments in cities like Dallas to post so-called tollway offender names on county websites, a yearlong Dallas Morning News investigation on tolls found.

On average, Texas seizes thousands of driver's licenses a year and blocks vehicle registration stickers for unpaid toll fees. A total of 226,847 motorists last year received letters that their registration renewals would be blocked by just two of the state's largest tollway authorities — the North Texas Tollway Authority in Dallas and the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority in Austin, The News' reporting revealed. NTTA has also impounded a handful of cars over the last 10 years.

And unlike other states, which offer discounts to drivers who frequently use tollways or for those from low-income households, most of Texas' more than two dozen toll operators offer few concessions or price cuts.

The vigorous collection practices continue even though some of the state's largest public tollway operators have amassed so much money in cash reserves they could offer millions of drivers free access to toll roads and still have enough money to pay their debts to investors, The News' investigation found.

For example, the Harris County Toll Road Authority, which manages toll roads in the Houston area, is holding \$1 billion in unrestricted cash and investments as of the fiscal year that ended Feb. 28, 2022, the most recent report available to the public. From 2019 to 2022, the authority transferred another \$1.06 billion in surplus toll revenues to Harris County to pay for transportation-related items that did not include customer discounts, according to the February 2022 financial statement and an independent auditor's report.

Other toll operators say the reserves allow them to borrow at lower interest rates to build and maintain future roads. “It’s incredibly expensive,” said Nancy St. Pierre, NTTA spokeswoman. “People underestimate how much that is.”

Other findings

In addition to reviewing audits and financial documents for the state’s three largest public tollway systems for roads that were built as early as 1983, The News’ investigation included interviews with dozens of elected officials, legal analysts, county tax assessors and court clerks. Clerks are responsible for processing tollway tickets for unpaid fees and fines, and tax assessors issue vehicle registration blocks.

The News attempted to speak with the state’s three largest tollway operators, nearly two dozen justices of the peace in Dallas, Collin, Tarrant and Denton counties that handle toll tickets and state and national transportation officials. Journalists also attended court hearings and reviewed thousands of pages of documents officials sent after receiving Texas Public Information Act requests.

The investigation revealed that North Texas — where the pace of construction of tollways over the past two decades has far exceeded other regions in the state — is the epicenter for criminal enforcement of unpaid tolls.

Among other findings: Citations issued by the NTTA — which oversees five toll roads, two bridges and a tunnel in Collin, Dallas, Denton and Tarrant counties — eclipse all other cases handled by some justices of the peace and municipal courts in North Texas, including evictions, debt collections and small claims disputes. To handle the backlog of cases, a Tarrant County judge told The News, he has to pay his staff overtime.

Justice of the Peace Sergio De Leon showed The News a standing-room-only storage area filled with active cases of defendants who have not responded to notices and in a matter of weeks will have their driver’s licenses suspended unless they enter a plea to clear the citations. NTTA representatives who appear in court to negotiate with defendants have been so overwhelmed by the number of citations that key evidence is sometimes left out of court files, according to a Dallas attorney who shared the public files of his ticketed clients with The News .

The News’ examination also found that the methods Texas uses to criminally charge vehicle owners may stand on shaky legal ground. The only available evidence that triggers toll fees is a photo of a vehicle’s license plate traveling a toll road. Prosecutors can’t legally meet the burden of proof necessary in a criminal case with just a photo of a vehicle, several legal experts said.

Under criminal law, evidence must support convicting someone without any doubt that they acted illegally. If there isn’t proof to show who was driving, there isn’t enough evidence to convict, they said. In 2019, the Texas Legislature voted overwhelmingly to ban red-light cameras because of similar concerns.

“You have to prove in a criminal case beyond a reasonable doubt that a person drove a vehicle through without paying a toll,” said Lisa Foster, a retired California superior court judge who is now co-director of the Fines and Fees Justice Center, an organization that works to ensure fines are

equitably imposed and enforced. “You can’t prosecute a car, you have to prosecute people for doing things illegally.”

Legal wrangling

It’s also unclear whether some toll operators are giving drivers a chance to dispute registration blocks on their vehicles, The News found.

While state law spells out a person’s right to request a court hearing over a registration block no later than 30 days after they are notified, the NTTA said only two people have set a hearing since it began collecting tolls. However, an attorney in Dallas who defends drivers for toll citations provided The News with documents supporting multiple requests he sent to NTTA that went unanswered.

Another troubling dilemma is the fact that it appears some toll operators might not have processes in place to adequately ensure that drivers understand the fees and fines they are being charged. The News’ investigation found some drivers are routinely surprised by penalties. Sometimes, they occur because vehicle owners don’t know their credit cards stored with the tollway authority have expired, the investigation found.

Other times, it’s because someone sold the vehicle but didn’t notify the state about the sale. NTTA said it sends notifications to anyone who opts into their alerts. State lawmakers passed a law last year that now requires tollway operators to notify drivers if the payment methods they link to their NTTA accounts have expired.

Still, the notification efforts haven’t helped Texans like Morris Shepard who, to date, has spent countless hours trying to resolve his issue with NTTA, which pursued him for unpaid tolls when it could not withdraw money from his bank account. His account was frozen suddenly because of potential fraud, he said. Shepard, like so many other drivers The News interviewed, still ended up in court.

The News also found that toll enforcement across North Texas overwhelmingly impacts people of color and those who live in low- to moderate-income communities.

The News analyzed 10 years of data, from 2013 to 2023, for roughly 160,000 tickets issued across the state for failure to pay tolls. The analysis found nearly 40% of defendants were African American drivers like the Shepards, or Fort Worth single mother Dee Davis, who owed \$17,200 in tolls and penalties, even though Black people make up only 13% of active license holders in Texas. The analysis was based on data provided by municipal and justice of the peace courts under a voluntary reporting program of the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Tollway operators acknowledged that their systems make mistakes. NTTA, for example, processes close to 3 million transactions a day, St. Pierre said. Most are undisputed. But when there’s an error, NTTA corrects it, she said.

The CTRMA in Austin also “strives for fairness” and will dismiss charges if it is proven that its technology or processes were at fault, spokeswoman Jori Lui said.

Bottom line: Taking a toll road is optional, operators said.

“If you don’t like the amount you’re being charged, whether it’s on our roads or any other, don’t do it,” St. Pierre said.

How we got here

The collection concerns held by so many people The News spoke to didn’t always exist.

That’s because toll fee collection used to be far simpler.

Those born before 1989 may remember throwing a few quarters in a large bin and waiting for a guard rail to rise as you made it through a toll road. If you didn’t have the exact amount, you drove to an attended booth for change.

Back then, payment was guaranteed because drivers were forced to stop at a toll plaza to pay or toss money into a catch basket, said Mark Muriello, director of policy and government affairs at the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association, a Washington, D.C.-based worldwide association for the owners and operators of toll facilities.

In 1989, North Texas was among the first communities in the country to contract with a company to manage an automatic cash payment system for tolls, according to news reports.

While the changes created a need for more technology, it made the process more efficient, Muriello said. There were fewer accidents because drivers no longer had to merge into traffic after leaving toll plazas, he said.

By 2009, electronic toll tags largely ended cash-pay tolling. That’s when drivers started mounting electronic tags they received from tollway operators to their car’s front mirrors. The tags contained microchips that connected to prepaid toll accounts that drivers set up online. Now, each time a driver enters a tollway, an electronic reader above the toll road scans the microchip inside the tag and a toll fee is debited from the driver’s account.

For drivers who don’t have toll tags, an image of their license plate is taken and the tollway operator uses it to scan Department of Motor Vehicles records for the car’s registered owner. Tollway operators then send a bill to the name listed on the DMV’s website as the owner.

The big squeeze

While technology made it easier for drivers to use toll roads, it made it harder for toll operators to collect fees for people without toll tags.

So NTTA doubled down. By 2010, NTTA began keeping records of vehicle owners who did not have toll tags and frequently used a toll without paying. It slapped these drivers with fees and penalties, which sometimes added another 80% to their toll costs, according to articles from The News at the time. Two years later, it created a “Top Violators” webpage that contained the names of individuals who owed money for more than 100 outstanding tolls. In a 2012 news release, NTTA said the list was designed to provide the public with a way to easily determine if they owed a significant debt and put them on notice that they may be subject to collections lawsuits and other enforcement actions.

Over the next few years, NTTA published additional lists for what it described as “deadbeats.” The authority sued those who wound up on this list in justice of the peace courts throughout North Texas, News articles show. CTRMA, which oversees six toll roads in the Austin area, also refers cases to justice of the peace courts, a CTRMA spokeswoman said in an email in response to questions from The News .

By 2013, a new state law gave toll operators another tool to penalize those with unpaid toll fees: the power to impound vehicles and block vehicle registrations. The registration blocks are allowed in about a dozen states, but lawmakers in states like Oklahoma want to stop them, according to news reports.

To help them more effectively pursue offenders, NTTA and the state’s two other public toll operators for nearly two decades also have relied on help from debt collection attorneys and hired high-profile law firms to represent them. NTTA also does this work for others. Private tollway operators pay NTTA to pursue drivers with unpaid toll bills in North Texas justice of the peace courts.

From 2018 to 2023, HCTRA paid \$30 million in collection attorney fees in addition to \$20 million to Austin law firm Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson to pursue other remedies such as registration blocks and driver’s license suspensions on toll evaders, according to records The News obtained from the Houston-area toll operator under the Texas Public Information Act.

From May 2022 to May 2023, NTTA sent nearly 172,000 scofflaw requests to Texas DPS for habitual violator statuses. The designation, which applies to a driver who has accumulated 100 or more unpaid tolls within 12 months, triggers vehicle registration blocks in Dallas, Denton, Tarrant and Collin counties. From July 2022 to July 2023, NTTA collected \$153 million in toll enforcement remedies, records show.

In total, based on those figures, North Texas counties have lost more than \$10.3 million in registration fees that their city leaders cannot collect because of vehicle blocks by toll operators, based on the average cost to register each vehicle, which is \$60 in Texas.

Collin County Tax Assessor Kenneth Maun told The News he refused to enforce the blocks toll operators like NTTA requested for more than a decade.

“I would find them tremendously out of date, items being billed to taxpayers who didn’t know it,” he said. “The car had already been sold one or two times. And, they (NTTA) didn’t clean anything up.”

“I wasn’t going to touch them (NTTA) because I thought they were doing a horrible job, that was for the counties, for the taxpayers, for everybody,” he said.

He finally relented around 2017, he said, when county commissioners included in the county budget three additional full-time positions to help with the workload. But years later, he said not much has changed. Billing errors for NTTA customers still exist, he said.

“I don’t respect their administrative abilities,” Maun said.

Chaos and confusion

Many of the concerns Maun described impact drivers in courts across North Texas every day, The News’ investigation revealed.

In a Frisco courtroom in February, Justice of Peace James DePiazza prepared to issue arrest warrants for people who had failed to respond to his court notices for unpaid toll fees.

He looked up at rows of empty seats. Four of the five people sitting there that morning said they had addressed their citations with NTTA. They wondered why they still received court notices.

DePiazza, who serves in Precinct 2 in Denton County, told The News much of his job is spent explaining to the public how the system works. On that day, he shared from his bench that even if a driver contacts NTTA to address unpaid tolls, they must still enter a plea to address the criminal side of the infraction with the court.

DePiazza scheduled two pretrial hearings for people who pleaded not guilty with the Denton County district attorney's office in his court that day. One hearing was for a man who told DePiazza the NTTA had dismissed his charges in a bankruptcy he filed in 2021. Another hearing was for a man who said he had sold his car before the citation occurred. DePiazza told the man he needed to file a vehicle transfer notification within 30 days of the sale in order to clear the court citation.

"NTTA can come back and charge you for those tolls" if the buyer doesn't register the vehicle or he does not file the transfer notice within 30 days of the sale, DePiazza told him.

Then, DePiazza heard his final case that day — and quickly dismissed it.

Seventy-six-year-old grandmother Andrea Peralta of Lewisville had loaned her car to her grandson, she said. She was on a breathing machine because she caught COVID-19 in 2021 and it damaged her lungs, she said, so she needed to get back home as soon as possible.

"He took off and I guess left me holding the bag," she said about her grandson.

DePiazza waived court fines after Peralta showed him she was on Social Security. Peralta said she wasn't sure how much she owed NTTA, but she sold her car for \$300 more than a year ago because she couldn't afford to fix it.

She couldn't remember the exact date, though.

"It's been a while," she said.

Jeffrey Beltz, an attorney who represents people at court hearings over unpaid toll fines, said too often, NTTA representatives do not provide enough evidence to prove a driver is guilty.

The News met Beltz last summer as he waited alone one day in Justice of Peace Sara Martinez's Dallas court. NTTA representatives were supposed to attend the court hearing to prove his client's toll violation, but the court postponed the hearing. Beltz's client was on the hook for \$380.01 in unpaid tolls in addition to \$525 in administrative fees from NTTA, according to a court citation record he shared with The News .

His client's paperwork included the information that noted the total amount of unpaid tolls owed, but not a breakdown of each tollway violation his client allegedly had incurred. There was no way his client could verify the charges, he said. The documents also did not include snapshots from NTTA of the license plate involved in the toll violations.

“If you’re filing a criminal case, how in the world can you sit there with a straight face and say this is enough evidence?” Beltz said. “These are criminal cases and they require the highest burden of proof in the land.”

NTTA also has not responded to requests he has made for hearings to contest blocks on car registrations, Beltz said.

NTTA told The News only two drivers have ever set a hearing to contest a registration block and in each of those cases, the court affirmed the block.

What’s more, NTTA simply follows the law, St. Pierre said.

“If your car is used in the commission of a crime, it’s your car,” she said. “There is a degree of responsibility that comes with owning a vehicle whether it’s paying tolls or making the car payment or keeping it insured.”

90% in North Texas

Between 2013 and 2023, roughly 146,000 of the 160,000 court tickets sent out for violations across the state for unpaid toll violations were concentrated in Tarrant, Dallas, Denton and Collin counties, where NTTA operates, according to data The News reviewed from DPS.

The News called and emailed the state’s three largest toll road operators, HCTRA, CTRMA and NTTA.

Only NTTA agreed to an interview.

When presented with The News’ findings about the actions it takes to punish violators, NTTA officials said it operates fairly.

If a driver is concerned about affordability, there are alternative routes that might better fit their budget, St. Pierre said.

“We’re being asked, ‘Why aren’t you being fair to them?’ when my first question is, ‘Well they used the toll roads, why would they not pay for what they got?’”

At the end of the day, St. Pierre said, “We just want what’s owed for using the road.”

Dee Davis, the Fort Worth single mom, was hoping a phone call to NTTA to explain her situation would resolve her \$17,200 toll bill. But their answer surprised her. She was told that the only payment plan they would accept was at least \$300 a month.

Several years ago, her ex-boyfriend used to borrow her car, often driving it on toll roads to get to work. She had never driven on toll roads. She guesses that he must have hidden the tollway citations from her, or maybe they had been sent to an old address where they lived before their breakup.

This year, she said she’s already been stopped by police five times on her way home from work for an expired registration sticker. NTTA blocked her from renewing her car registration because she is a habitual violator. The status gives NTTA the authority to suspend drivers’ licenses, bar those drivers from using their tollways and impound their cars.

Many habitual violators are everyday Texans working to make ends meet, two judges said in interviews with The News. They are hair stylists, bartenders, deployed military, single parents and grandmothers. They are small business owners and construction workers.

Some mistakenly get on a tollway and don't realize how quickly the fees add up, judges said. One hundred charges can happen in a few weeks for a driver who passes several stations on a toll road to get to work and back every day.

'Redundant process'

Morris Shepard had a toll tag on his car. For years, money was automatically withdrawn from his bank account to pay for his drives on toll roads. But when his bank account was frozen to protect him after Amazon found potentially fraudulent activity, his bank declined his toll payments. The Shepards said they never received notice from NTTA that toll payments could not be withdrawn.

They visited an NTTA office in Plano in February after receiving a letter from Denton County Justice of the Peace Precinct 2 that said Morris Shepard could be arrested for unpaid tolls. They said they were surprised when after they explained their situation, NTTA told them they still had to go to court.

Because he's a disabled military veteran, Morris Shepard is eligible to drive for free on some Texas toll roads under qualifying discount programs accepted by TxDOT and Austin's regional mobility authority. NTTA only waives tolls for Legion of Valor members under a program that is subsidized by an anonymous third-party sponsor.

In court that February morning, the judge set Morris Shepard's next hearing for 9 a.m. April 11, when he and his wife said they would have in hand documented proof of the fraudulent activity on their bank account.

But the case did not end that day. And it didn't matter that he had documents to show that he had not intentionally tried to avoid paying tolls.

At the April 11 hearing, an assistant district attorney with Denton County told Shepard he must still pay the toll fees he owes NTTA.

Shepard also learned he would receive an email with a Zoom link for an upcoming meeting to work out a payment plan with NTTA representatives. After that, he needed to bring to the court documented proof of his agreement with NTTA and pay \$81 in court costs. Shepard's ticket for unpaid tolls would be removed from his record if he did not receive another citation in the next 90 days.

In the hallway after the April hearing, Shepard said he was glad his court fees and fines were reduced. He could have been ordered to pay as much as \$331 but the Precinct 2 court reduces fines to incentivize people to clear their citations.

His wife was still upset that despite their proof and talk with NTTA, they still had to go to court and pay toll penalties.

"You get the runaround," LaTasha Shepard said. "You had to go there first, and then you've got to come back here. You've got to do all this stuff."

“This is a redundant process,” she said.

Part 3 : As Texas prepares for more growth, lawmakers may soon look for ways to lessen the burden of tolls. In North Texas, one judge slashes fines to “help people take care of their business.” Penalties don’t have to be extreme, he says. Meanwhile, some states offer rebates and discounts to low-income families and frequent users.

yamil.berard@dallasnews.com,

shuyao.xiao@dallasnews.com

Optimism grows for US high-speed rail

Private- and public-sector advocates praised recent progress at the annual high-speed rail conference in Washington, D.C., this week.

Published May 17, 2024

Dan Zukowski
Senior Reporter

An air of optimism prevailed at this year's U.S. High Speed Rail conference, held May 14-15 in Washington, D.C. With the Las Vegas to Southern California line starting construction, the California project continuing to build and Amtrak reviving the possibility of a Dallas to Houston high-speed rail line, "the outlook has never looked brighter" for high-speed rail in the U.S., said Andy Kunz, president and CEO of the US High Speed Rail Association, in opening remarks Tuesday.

"This year is one we're going to remember in the history of high-speed rail," said Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. "And we are just getting warmed up." The conference featured Buttigieg in conversation with Ray LaHood, transportation secretary from 2009 to 2013, during the Obama administration.

Buttigieg said he sees the possibility of a budding domestic high-speed rail industry, "taking its place alongside the auto industry." However, with funding from the 2021 infrastructure law ending after fiscal year 2026, "we do need to think about the sustainability of rail funding," he said.

The proposed Texas Central project to connect Dallas and Houston by high-speed rail dates back at least 10 years, when the environmental review process began, but appeared to stall out during the COVID-19 pandemic. Then in August 2023, Amtrak announced it was in talks with Texas Central Partners to advance the project.

Andy Byford, Amtrak's senior vice president of high-speed rail development programs, said at the conference Wednesday that the project "will be transformative: 90-minute journeys between Dallas and Houston, with all of the economic benefit that that would generate."

Byford also said Amtrak is taking a holistic approach to Texas rail travel, including both its conventional trains and working with the North Central Texas Council of Governments on a separate project to connect Dallas and Fort Worth by high-speed rail. "It's part of the broader strategy of Amtrak to get people riding the rails again, to upgrade the whole of the system and to fit in where it makes sense to identify corridors that we do think have merit and take them forward," Byford said.

Brightline West, which will connect Las Vegas and Rancho Cucamonga in Southern California, is a public-private partnership, having received \$3 billion in federal grants for the \$12 billion project. “We are trying to be as efficient as we can with the capital spend,” Brightline CEO Mike Reininger said at the conference. The company expects the 218-mile rail line to open in 2028, in time for the Summer Olympics being held in Los Angeles.

Asked if Brightline is considering other high-speed rail projects in the U.S., Reininger said he had no news to report, but added, “Here’s a clue: 200 to 300 miles apart, big cities, lots of existing travel, broken infrastructure systems, that’s where a high-speed train will work. So wherever that exists in the United States, we are interested in it.”

But will people get out of their cars and take to the rails? “I am firmly convinced that the first time that the first customer buys that first ticket for that first true high-speed rail on U.S. soil, there will be no going back,” Buttigieg said at the conference. “People will expect and demand it everywhere.”

DFW cannot “build out” of traffic troubles

Decades of rapid population growth in Dallas-Fort Worth has brought about a problem with no easy solutions

By [Ben Russell](#) • Published 2 hours ago • Updated 2 hours ago

Decades of rapid population growth in Dallas-Fort Worth has brought about a problem with no easy solutions – no amount of highway construction can “build” North Texas out of its growing traffic troubles.

“We can't build our way out. We don't have the funding to do it. And, frankly, we don't have the ability to construct the amount of capacity that we need,” said Dan Lamers, the Senior Manager of Metropolitan Transportation Planning for the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG).

The Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex grew faster than any other major metropolitan area in the country between 2022 and 2023., according to the [U.S. Census](#). Nearly 153,000 people were added to the approximately 8.1 million who now call the DFW area home as of 2023.

“It's been my job to forecast travel demand and forecast roadway usage and transit usage for the last 39 years in the Dallas-Fort Worth area,” said Lamers. “When I started, we were a region of 3 million people. Now we're over 8 million.”

That rapid growth has made it difficult for transportation expansion to keep up.

“We have not been able to add as much transportation capacity or other infrastructure capacity to support the rapid growth that we've been seeing,” Lamers said.

The NCTCOG is currently in the planning phase of [Mobility 2050](#), a long-range transportation plan that aims to identify and solve traffic troubles of the future.

Public input on the Mobility 2050 plan will go a long way toward helping the NCTCOG prioritize “access to jobs, education, healthcare, and healthy food, and improving system safety and air quality,” according to the organization.

The request for public input includes a survey that asks questions like “In an ideal scenario, how would you prefer to access your job or workplace?”, and “What is your biggest pain point when it comes to transportation?”

You can access the survey [here](#).

How Celina's Strategic Plan Aims To Spur Further Growth

BY [DAVID SEELEY](#) • MAY 20, 2024

When the U.S. Census Bureau released its Vintage 2023 Population Estimates last week, it put a spotlight on the North Texas city of Celina by naming it America's fastest-growing city with a population of 20,000 or more. Celina "grew by 26.6%, more than 53 times that of the nation's growth rate of 0.5%," the bureau noted.

So how has Celina—a Collin County suburb north of Frisco and Prosper with a total 2023 population of 43,317—gotten so hot? Partly it's because of a relentless drumbeat of residential and multifamily developments in the city.

In January, we told you about Hillwood Communities announcing its fourth master-planned development in Celina, [Ramble by Hillwood](#), with 4,000 homes slated to "wind through an immersive nature experience" just north of the city's downtown. Last November, we told you about the planned [1876 Country Club](#) in Celina. Last August, we told you about Celina approving a plan for [Rainwater Crossing](#), a development with nearly 2,000 home sites from Green Brick Partners and Hersh Family Investments. In February 2023, we told you the 150-acre [Ranch at Uptown Celina](#) featuring a planned 450-plus homes. Also in the works are the 3,200-acre [Legacy Hills](#) development from Centurion American Development Group, with aims to offer 7,000 homes, 4,100 apartments, a 27-acre sports park, and 100 acres of commercial and retail; [Ten Mile Creek](#) from Corson Cramer Development, slated to have 371 single-family homes, 110 townhomes, and various rental homes and apartments; and [The Parks at Wilson Creek](#) from Cambridge Companies, a \$1.5 billion, 720-acre development whose first phase aims to offer 358 homes. Plus, there's [The Heights at Uptown Celina](#)—and, no doubt, another new project we'll be telling you about soon.

But all that development hasn't just happened. It's part of a plan.

Celina's Strategic Plan has a focus on innovative infrastructure—and 'Life Connected'

Built into the city of Celina's [Strategic Plan](#) for 2023-2025 is a focus on innovative infrastructure policies and projects that ensure "a sustainable path for growth." Celina also aims to be "the city of small business" by adopting policies, codes, and ordinances that "cultivate the right environment for small businesses to thrive."

A lot of the development projects listed above place great emphasis on parks, hike-and-bike trails, golf courses, water features, and more, in order to connect residents with the natural world and—importantly—each other.

That's a perfect reflection of Celina's tagline: Life Connected.

“Living a Life Connected is not just our tagline, it’s our mission that extends into every decision made,” the city says. “Life Connected touches on the social and physical aspects of connectivity. Objectives within this Strategic Plan goal touch upon quality-of-life enhancements that aim to keep residents invested long-term.”

One way the city aims to do that is by fortifying and expanding its historic downtown so it can “be the city of the future, connected to its past.” The city says it seeks to connect current and future residents to Celina’s unique past, and recommends future projects that “reflect Celina’s unique culture.”

Supporting businesses via the Celina EDC

All those thousands of homes being built in Celina will need countless businesses to support them, and the rising tide of population means a growing workforce that businesses can tap into.

In its strategic plan, Celina says it “actively supports a thriving business environment with the Celina Economic Development Corporation offering creative incentive packages for qualifying companies.” The city says it has a “supportive business retention and expansion program” that helps companies “thrive after relocating,” with a goal of attracting “high-tech and desirable” businesses to the area.

Young professionals and families have blazed trails northward from Dallas for generations—and it’s no coincidence that Celina is smack in the middle of that trajectory, with Preston Road flowing northward straight through the heart of the city. In December, the North Texas Tollway Authority announced it had reached unanimously agreement to extend the Dallas North Tollway six miles northward through both Prosper and Celina—putting Celina in a direct highway path to and from downtown Dallas and all that’s in between.

Based on all that’s being built in Celina and the population growth that’s coming with it, that highway can’t be laid down fast enough.

[America's Fastest-Growing City: How Celina's Strategic Plan Aims To Spur Further Growth » Dallas Innovates](#)

Texas slow to adopt toll relief

Other states that lead nation in tollway miles set examples for amnesty

By YAMIL BERARD and SHUYAO XIAO

Staff Writer

Inside James DePiazza's court in Denton County, thousands of North Texans who use the Sam Rayburn Tollway have pleaded for help.

The tollway cuts a diagonal path from Collin County's high-tech corridor, corporate campuses and expanding suburbs to DFW International Airport and the metro area at large. Its quick access has triggered a deluge of toll-related criminal cases that far exceed civil cases, such as eviction and debt claims, a yearlong investigation by The Dallas Morning News found.

DePiazza's sizable toll fee caseload illustrates Texas' unforgiving approach to drivers with unpaid fines. The state has the harshest penalties and consequences for not paying toll fees while being among the U.S. states with the most tollways.

But in DePiazza's court, since 2010 — after the Sam Rayburn Tollway opened — things have been different. He has regularly slashed toll fines. He also routinely encourages representatives from the North Texas Tollway Authority — which oversees five toll roads, two bridges and a tunnel — to explore payment options with the people in his court.

People need to “take care of their business,” he said. But the penalties for unpaid tolls don't have to be extreme either, he said.

“I want the behavior to change more than I want to be collecting their money,” DePiazza said.

As toll citations exceed all other disputes in some justice of the peace courts in North Texas, The News' investigation found, DePiazza's approach may serve as a model now that some lawmakers want to make toll reform the topic of an interim study they hope to kick off this year.

Early this year, state Rep. Terry Canales, D-Edinburg, urged Texas House Speaker Dade Phelan, R-Beaumont, to appoint a committee of lawmakers to explore options for relieving the burden of tolls on thousands of Texans.

Minimal discounts

The News' investigation into tolls found the state's concentration of paid roads has a significant impact on about 1.4 million people in North Texas because they live in areas where tollways are within a one-mile radius of their homes and their free road options — often several miles away from their homes — are among the most congested in the state.

Many of the nation's tollways operate in a handful of states — Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois and California. Yet each of those states — except Texas — has enacted meaningful discount programs and exemptions on toll fees.

Texas waives toll fees for disabled veterans on turnpikes that are maintained and operated by the Texas Department of Transportation, according to a TxDOT spokesman.

Public tollway providers, including the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority near Austin and the Fort Bend Tollway Authority in the Houston area, provide discounts to eligible veterans who have qualifying license plates and are registered, according to their websites. In addition, CTRMA has a “one-time courtesy waiver” for drivers who traveled a toll road in error or missed a bill due date. “This courtesy is only extended once,” spokeswoman Jori Lui said in response to questions from The News .

In early September 2023, the Harris County Toll Road Authority began offering a 10% discount for drivers, according to news reports, after the program was approved by Harris County commissioners in January 2023. The discount marked the first time in 40 years that HCTRA dropped costs for drivers, according to news reports. The discount only applies to drivers with an EZ Tag issued by HCTRA, not those with TxTags or those issued by the North Texas Tollway Authority. HCTRA spokeswoman Roxana Sibrian never responded to The News ’ questions after months of phone calls and emails.

One of the few discounts North Texas drivers can take advantage of is for those who have registered high-occupancy vehicles and motorcycles. These drivers receive a 50% discount during peak periods to drive on the TEXpress lanes in Dallas, Denton and Tarrant counties, according to the TEXpress website.

This means that the vast majority of the over 12 million toll users across the state and 6.7 million in North Texas aren’t eligible for any cost-saving programs, including lower-income families, commuters or elderly residents, The News ’ investigation uncovered.

Two of the other large public tollway operators told The News they are not able to offer additional discounts because they are still in debt from building the roads. Combined, NTTA and CTRMA owe more than \$12 billion to investors, financial records show.

Showing an aggressive pursuit of fees and penalties is a way to persuade a credit rating agency, such as Moody’s or Standard & Poor’s, to assign that toll operator a good credit rating, said Michael Maloney, a trial attorney in Manhattan who represents investors in securities fraud cases.

That is why collecting money on every vehicle using these roads is important, said Nancy St. Pierre, NTTA spokeswoman.

If a driver decides to jump on a toll road, they are essentially agreeing to pay for the use of the road, St. Pierre said.

“I don’t know that equity necessarily plays a role in our total system simply because people don’t have to use our roads,” she said.

Toll relief trends

While Texas offers few discounts for toll drivers, several other states over the past few years have adopted creative ways to provide relief, The News ’ examination found. In most cases, the goal is to lighten the financial burden on working families. In other cases, the effort is concentrated on improving access to mobility for drivers in low-income areas.

A Harvard University study on upward mobility found that commuting time is the single strongest factor in the likelihood of escaping poverty. The longer it takes to commute in a certain county, the less likely it is that low-income families are able to improve their financial status, the study found.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has supported toll discounts since they were introduced in summer 2022. Under the program to benefit motorists who frequently use toll roads, Florida drivers who use transponders and have 35 or more qualifying toll transactions per month receive a 50% credit to their accounts. In 2023, the program was expected to benefit about 1.2 million drivers and save the average commuter nearly \$400, according to DeSantis' office. Florida lawmakers voted to extend the program in March 2024.

In 2020, Illinois launched a tolling reform and relief package that featured a significant reduction for those with unpaid tolls. It also advanced amnesty and fine reductions for all tollway customers with outstanding fees.

In 2022, it expanded its I-PASS Assist program that includes additional fee dismissals for low-wage working families. Drivers who participate in the program are offered a free deposit on transponders, a waiver of invoice fees and gift cards. The goal is to improve the disparate impact fines and fees have on working families, according to the website for the Illinois Tollway. More than 36,000 people are signed up for the program, which includes saving 50% on tolls, according to spokesman Daniel Rozek.

In July 2023, California introduced two programs to help Bay Area drivers who have accumulated overdue tolls and violation penalties. The first program is a one-time waiver of penalties — available to all drivers regardless of their income — for unpaid toll fines. A second program, the Bay Area Toll Payment Plan, helps low-income households in the San Francisco Bay Area with toll-related debt over \$100 pay off overdue bills, penalties or fees over 24 months.

New Jersey and New York thruway and port authorities have established independent tollway payer advocacy offices to investigate complaints from drivers. The offices study the trends and information derived from their investigations to recommend improvements and policy changes in cashless tolling practices. According to the toll payer advocacy program of the New York State Thruway Authority, the office aims to ensure all toll payers receive “fair and responsive treatment” and to “identify and resolve problems and recommend improvements to customer service.”

In March, lawmakers in Texas' neighboring state of Louisiana introduced a bill to prohibit the operator of a toll facility from impacting the status of a person's driver's license for failure to pay tolls under certain circumstances. By contrast, thousands of Texas drivers who fail to respond to court notices get their driver's licenses suspended, according to the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Access to mobility

The News' investigation also found the concentration of toll roads in North Texas disproportionately affects those in predominantly moderate- to low-income neighborhoods where the median household income of about \$55,000 is less than the state median of \$73,035 a year, according to the 2022 American Community Survey of the U.S. Census Bureau.

Additionally, a disproportionate number of people who have been cited by Texas courts for failure to pay tolls are Black, the investigation revealed. The News analyzed 160,000 court citations and data obtained from Texas DPS under the Texas Public Information Act. The information, which included the names, races and addresses of defendants, spanned 10 years' worth of toll tickets primarily in North Texas and were provided by municipal and justice of the peace courts under a voluntary reporting program.

The Harvard mobility study made a direct link between efficient transportation and opportunities for higher-paying jobs. A lack of transportation limits such opportunities, it said.

It's simple, said Amy Thomson, transportation policy and programs manager for TransForm, an Oakland-based advocacy group that focuses on transportation options and housing policy across California.

The goal of most effective relief programs is to make mobility more accessible to different types of people, she said.

Workers who have to haul construction equipment in larger vehicles will need larger discounts to afford to drive on toll roads, she said.

Drivers who live in places surrounded by tolls with few free road options, as well as drivers who need to drive on toll roads on a regular basis, likely need some relief, and so do people of color and low-income people — who have been typically left out of the planning process for years, Thomson added.

"There needs to be public engagement in order to identify what road pricing structures are available to them so these people don't lose mobility," she said.

'Not justifiable'

During the pandemic, when many communities suffered economically from job losses, North Texas courts saw a spike in toll-related citations, records obtained by The News show. For example, in 2020, Collin County reported 5,441 arrest warrants — up from 3,113 warrants in 2019.

As of January, Denton County had 4,925 arrest warrants on 5,503 active cases of unpaid tolls, records showed.

In recent years, fewer warrants have been issued. From January 2021 to April 2024, Collin County had 1,375 arrest warrants, documents provided by the court to The News showed.

In 2019, when he was first elected, Dallas Justice of the Peace Michael Jones said he signed many arrest warrants for people who violated tolls. "It's the law," he said.

In recent months, he signed only four, he said. More people are paying their toll tickets, he said.

The court for Tarrant County Justice of the Peace Precinct 5 handles toll violations that occur on the Chisholm Trail Parkway, a 27-mile toll road that connects Fort Worth to Cleburne.

For this reason, Justice of the Peace Sergio De Leon said he is mindful that many of the people in his court for unpaid toll fees face tough economic times.

In 2013, De Leon said it was rare that his court dealt with unpaid toll violations. A decade later, his court manages thousands of cases for people who have been sued for toll violations. One of his storage rooms is stacked to the ceiling with boxes of active unpaid toll fine cases.

Those who do not enter a plea with his court will have their driver's license suspended within 60 to 90 days, he said.

Since the pandemic, De Leon said he has tried to speed up the process for anyone who wants to clear their tickets. Defendants have the option to call the court or contact De Leon by email, he said.

It can be time-consuming, though, for his office. "My overtime budget is through the roof," he said.

For the fiscal year from Oct. 1, 2023, to Oct. 1, 2024, Tarrant County commissioners approved a budget for his court that includes \$50,000 in overtime, of which at least 80% will cover salaries for clerks to process tollway citations, De Leon said.

When dealing with the public, De Leon's motto is "use common sense and take a humble approach that anyone can understand regardless of their circumstances in life."

He said he would support legislative action to help lift the economic burden of tolls on motorists.

In the meantime, DeLeon said he won't issue arrest warrants.

Why?

"It's not justifiable," he said.

yamil.berard@dallasnews.com, shuyao.xiao@dallasnews.com

Why am I waiting longer at Texas railroad crossings?

Longer trains, combined with Texas' expansive rail network, have led to driver frustration.

By [Amber Gaudet](#)

6:00 AM on May 21, 2024

LISTEN

Texas [reported more than 6,300 blocked railroad crossings](#) in the last year, outpacing all other states by fourfold.

More than 90% of the blocked crossings reported to the Federal Railroad Administration were caused by stationary trains, with just over 6% caused by moving trains and nearly 3% caused by activated lights/gates when no train was present. Texas has about 15,000 crossings, according to the Texas Department of Transportation, more than any other state.

ADVERTISEMENT

Average train length has increased over time, with many trains now stretching on for two or three miles as railroads look to increase efficiency through a practice known as precision-scheduled railroading. Blocked crossings have led to increased risks as frustrated pedestrians attempt to climb on, over or through stationary train cars, an incident observed in nearly 27% of blocked Texas crossings in the past year.

Related: [What is precision scheduled railroading?](#)

Breaking News

Get the latest breaking news from North Texas and beyond.

SIGN UP

Or with:

GOOGLE
FACEBOOK

By signing up you agree to our [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#)

Blocked crossings can prevent first responders, delivery drivers and commuters from reaching their destination. Drivers have reported trains parked for hours delaying school buses and postal deliveries, blocking access to a section of town or preventing bicycle crossings in freezing weather. Many reports say the blockings occur daily.

“This crossing is blocked several times a day from 15 minutes to two hours,” one reporter wrote of a crossing in Sweetwater. Another in Saginaw reported a train so long that it blocked a crossing a half-mile away, preventing east and west traffic movement for miles.

ADVERTISEMENT

“Both crossings to get out of our neighborhood are blocked at the same time,” a Haslet resident reported. “If there was an emergency someone would die waiting for help.”

There are no laws in place to limit how long trains can block crossings.

Related: [The rail industry is changing. A small Texas town is fighting back](#)

The number of blocked crossings is likely underreported since some drivers and pedestrians might be unaware of the federal reporting system, or may reach out to the railroads directly.

ADVERTISEMENT

Several efforts are underway to address the safety issues of at-grade crossings. Texas [was awarded more than \\$86 million](#) in funds from the federal Rail Crossing Elimination Grant Program in 2022. The grants fund projects that will create separations like overpasses and underpasses and other measures to improve safety at crossings.

To report a blocked crossing, visit the [Federal Railroad Administration’s website](#). Union Pacific, which was the top-reported railroad by far for blocked crossings, directs customers to report emergencies at 1-888-877-7267. Other railroads vary in how the public can reach them, so check online.

Arlington mayor backs high-speed rail as economic engine

by [Lance Murray](#) May 21, 2024 3:42 pm

Arlington Mayor Jim Ross says the proposed high-speed rail line that could run through his city would be an economic game changer that literally puts Arlington at the center of the region's transportation plans.

Ross said he is excited about high-speed rail's potential and that his city is ready to lead.

He recently wrote an op-ed piece on the subject that ran in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. He said the column was needed to get a Tarrant County voice into the general discussion.

"I think two previous mayors in Dallas did an op-ed," Ross said. "And when the opportunity came up, I thought it would be good for someone to hear from a mayor over here in Tarrant County as well."

Ross said he sees the [proposed high-speed rail line](#), which would run east and west from Dallas and Fort Worth along Interstate 30 through Arlington, as a job-generating dynamo for the entire region, particularly Arlington. The proposed line would head south from Dallas to Houston, according to current plans.

"You know anytime you have the ability to connect with other major metropolitan areas outside of your city that has the ability to quickly and rapidly transfer employees to and from their job sites, it's going to

be a job generator,” Ross said in a joint interview with the Arlington Report and KERA radio.

He said North Texas’ rapidly growing population calls for alternatives that will help that growth.

“The future isn’t just approaching; it’s here. In 2023, the Dallas-Fort Worth area topped the nation in population growth and secured the second spot for job creation, welcoming more than 152,598 residents and adding more than 154,000 jobs, as reported by the U.S. Census and federal employment data,” Ross wrote [in his op-ed](#). “This rapid expansion underscores an immediate need for innovative solutions.”

Ross said that Dallas-Fort Worth is the fourth-largest metropolitan area in the country.

“But all indications are we’re going to overcome the Chicago area which is number three before too long,” he said. “The high-speed rail is the first major step and will help us to regionalize effective transportation here in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

The mayor said high-speed rail is badly needed.

“Here in DFW, we have three transit authorities and then we have a group of non-subscribers which are like Arlington in Grand Prairie and others — which essentially provides for different groups of cities, all doing sort of their own independent thing,” Ross said. “This high-speed rail system helps to regionalize all of those efforts at bringing people together. The better Dallas does, the better we do, the better Fort Worth does and vice versa.”

Tourism also is a major driving force for bringing high-speed rail, Ross said.

“We’re the largest tourism destination anywhere in the southwest United States,” he said. “Countrywide, I think Orlando is the only place that beats us.”

He said the city is bringing 18-20 million people a year, and tourism is growing with the opening of the National Medal of Honor Museum in Arlington coming next March. There’s also Six Flags Over Texas, Hurricane Harbor, the world champion Texas Rangers, and the Dallas Cowboys. Ross also noted the many concerts the city hosts as well as the recent Professional Bull Riders championship at AT&T Stadium.

“We have big, big, big tourism here, more so than the rest of North Texas combined,” he said. “So that’s what we bring to the table, and people don’t understand Arlington is a big city population wise, land wise. We’re bigger than Pittsburgh and New Orleans, and we’re about the same size as Tampa. We’re bigger than St. Louis.”

That makes Arlington unique.

“You take Arlington out of the middle of Dallas and Fort Worth and put us anywhere else in the country and we’re going to be a major metropolitan area. We just happen to be between two other big cities.”

But is high-speed rail doable?

“It’s certainly doable,” Ross said. “This is something that if it goes as they plan on it going will be Amtrak run and operated.”

And, Ross said he believes it is economically feasible, too.

“This is something where there’s not a lot of private land that needs to be acquired,” Ross said. “It’s all government land. Coming down the middle of I-30 with plenty of government and private monies to help get this thing done.”

Ross said the taxpayer won't be on the hook, either.

“It's not anything that's going to cost taxpayers any huge amounts of money to get this thing off the ground,” Ross said.

At a [recent public meeting](#) held by North Central Texas Council of Governments, planners emphasized that the planning is well underway and that decisions will need to be made on an operator of the rail line and on how it will be funded.

And, Ross said, a high-speed rail system will move Texas into the future of transportation.

“Here in the United States, compared to some of the other countries around the world, we're a little bit behind on these high-speed rail systems,” Ross said. “I'm excited about the fact that Texas has really taken the lead on this. And that's good stuff. You know, kudos to Texas.”

City of Dallas Taps Ford Pro To Help Electrify Its Fleet with EV Charging Infrastructure

With 5,400 vehicles now serving the community, the city of Dallas aims to electrify its fleet by 2040. Mayor Eric Johnson called the 10-year agreement with Ford Pro "a significant milestone" in making that happen.

BY [DAVID SEELEY](#) • MAY 21, 2024

The city of Dallas aims to electrify its vehicle fleet by 2040 as part of its Climate Action Plan. To drive toward that, the city has selected Ford Pro to grow and manage the EV charging infrastructure for its fleet operations.

Ford Pro is the Dearborn, Michigan-based commercial division of Ford Motor Company.

Per the agreement, the city of Dallas will install Ford Pro chargers at the city's worksites and use Ford Pro smart charging software to customize and manage EV charging performance, Ford Pro said. Dallas will use the company's software and hardware solution "to help ensure its fleet vehicles are charged optimally and ready for work when they need them."

If Dallas does eventually go fully electric, it will have lots of vehicles to charge up—there are currently 5,400 vehicles in the city's fleet.

In 2020, the city approved a [climate action plan](#) that aims to improve quality of life, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prepare for the impacts of climate change, and "create a healthier and more prosperous community." A key part of the plan is installing EV chargers throughout the city and adding light-duty EVs to the city's fleet.

'A significant milestone'

"The city of Dallas is committed to a clean, safe, and healthy environment, and we're making great strides in our efforts to reduce emissions and improve air quality," Dallas Mayor Eric Johnson said in a statement. "This agreement with Ford Pro marks a significant milestone and will help our city avoid energy waste and save money on energy costs. We look forward to building upon our work with Ford Pro to further scale EV charging infrastructure and electrify our fleet operations to continue to serve our great city now and in the future."

Ford Pro CEO Ted Cannis noted that EV adoption is "on the rise" with state and local government fleets.

“We’re proud to provide smart charging software and hardware to help electrify one of the Lone Star State’s biggest cities in one of America’s biggest metro areas,” Cannis said in a statement. “The impact software can have on EV charging can be substantial, helping public agencies like the city of Dallas not only manage charging infrastructure today, but help determine where chargers may be needed in the future.”

Ford Pro noted that 4 million vehicles are currently operated by state and local governments in the U.S., and that the federal government has called for most federal vehicle purchases to be zero-emission vehicles by 2035, an even more aggressive target than the one Dallas has set.

“Hundreds” of local governments are among Ford Pro Charging’s customers, the company said, adding that the trend toward fleet electrification “may be driven in part by rising fuel costs, potentially lower operational costs provided by EVs, and a match of good use cases for how municipal agencies use EVs.”

How US High Speed Rail Plan Compares to China's

Published May 19, 2024 at 8:00 AM EDT

By [James Bickerton](#)

US News Reporter

The U.S. is witnessing an explosion of interest in high-speed railways, and superfast lines are taking shape in several parts of the country, but America is playing catch-up with many countries, especially China.

In April, construction began on [America's first high-speed rail line](#), which will transport passengers between Las Vegas and southern California along 218 miles of track. A number of other projects have been proposed, including plans for high-speed rail lines linking Dallas to Houston and Fort Worth in Texas.

These developments are no doubt stimulating aspirations for similar projects at other major hubs, such as Chicago.

However, the U.S. high-speed rail network remains a minnow compared to China, its main geopolitical competition, which boasts more miles of high-speed rail line than any other country.

[According to Statista](#), in 2021 the Chinese high-speed rail network stretched to 25,000 miles and in 2019, 2.3 billion individual journeys were made on its lines, equating roughly 63 percent of all passenger rail travel in China.

By contrast, the U.S. has yet to open a high-speed rail line, generally defined as tracks which carry passenger trains between 124 and 220 mph.

Construction on America's first high-speed rail line isn't expected to be completed until 2028, when Los Angeles is due to [host the Olympic Games](#). The line is being built by Brightline West, which says trains will be capable of up to 200 mph, from Las Vegas to Cucamonga in southern California, taking a minimum expected time of two hours and ten minutes. Each train should be able to carry 500 passengers according to a [Fox 11](#) report. *Newsweek* has contacted Brightline for comment and clarification by email.

Unlike in the U.S., where private industry has a key role, in China almost all railway networks are controlled by the China State Railway Group, formerly the China Railway Corporation. In 2021, the state-run company recorded a net profit of 4.8 billion yuan, about \$664 million, though it had yet to regain its pre-coronavirus figures.

The rate of high-speed rail construction in China has been phenomenal. [CNN](#) reported in February 2022 that around half the network had been completed in the past five years alone. This network is projected to nearly double again in length, to around 45,000 miles, by 2035. It already has trains that can reach a maximum speed of 217 mph on many lines. Speaking to CNN, Olivia Cheung, a research fellow at the China Institute at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies, said the network isn't just connecting existing settlements but creating new ones. Referring to Chinese President [Xi Jinping](#), she said: "His scheme is grand in that it extends beyond just simply connecting existing towns, but existing towns with new mega-towns that are being constructed from scratch."

Many of the proposed high-speed rail lines in the U.S. are in the very early stages of development and are yet to achieve final approval, with some key details unclear.

The proposed [Dallas-Houston line](#) is intended to run trains at 240 mph, using Japanese Shinkansen technology. Journey times between the two cities will be slashed to 90 minutes, according to developers. Currently the journey takes 3 hours 25 minutes by car and over four hours by bus. The development received an endorsement in April by President [Joe Biden](#) and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and is being developed as a collaboration between Amtrak, America's national passenger railroad company, and Dallas-based firm Texas Central.

Separately, the North Central Texas Council of Government (NCTCOG) is working on plans for a high-speed rail line [between Dallas and Fort Worth](#), though they are still looking for a commercial partner and don't expect to complete the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process until early 2025, according to *The Dallas Morning News*.

House Democrat Mike Quigley is also calling for a high-speed rail line [connecting Chicago to St. Louis](#), though no plans for such a route have been formally submitted. Notably, other than the line connecting Las Vegas to southern California, work is not expected on any of the proposed U.S. lines in the immediate future.

Speaking to *Newsweek*, Professor Ian Savage, an expert in public transportation at the University of Northwestern University, suggested high-speed rail makes more sense for China due to its higher population density, though he also argued there is a strong case for constructing networks in parts of Texas.

He said: "Like many transportation economists, I have been skeptical of the case for high-speed rail in a geographically large and spread out country like the United States. However, I feel that there would be a stronger case for it in the Texas triangle (Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, Austin, San Antonio) than in many other parts of the country. The distances are about perfect for rail travel at about 250 miles.

"So there is a bit of a paradox in that Texas may be regarded as an auto-centric state, yet the rapid population growth in recent decades, coupled with increased truck traffic, has congested the highways to a point where there is a market opportunity for high speed rail. Central Texas has been transformed from wide-open spaces to a populated and congested region."

[How US High Speed Rail Plan Compares to China's \(newsweek.com\)](#)

NEWSWEEK

HOW HIGH SPEED RAIL COULD CHANGE TEXAS

By James Bickerton & Alex J. Rouhandeh

Proposed high-speed rail lines in Texas could "transform the state" as "a hub for business," according to one prominent academic as the Lone Star State wrestles with what could be some of its biggest infrastructure projects in decades.

There are preliminary plans to construct two new high-speed rail lines in the state, with one connecting Dallas to Houston, and the other Dallas to Fort Worth, in moves supporters claim will slash journey times between the key cities.

Speaking to *Newsweek*, [Republican](#) Senator John Cornyn said "we certainly need more transportation infrastructure in Texas" but warned the projects are "controversial" due to the concerns of landowners.

His GOP colleague [Ted Cruz](#) said the proposed high-speed lines would "create jobs and support the economy," but noted their permitting and finance has yet to be finalized.

The past few years have seen a renewed interest in high speed rail networks, which are already common in Western Europe, Japan and China, across the United States. In April, [construction began](#) on a new 218-mile line between Las Vegas and southern California which Brightline West, the company behind the project, claims will be the "first true high-speed passenger rail service" in the United States. The law school at Cornell University defines "high-speed rail" as services that are "reasonably expected to reach speeds of at least 110 miles per hour."

In April, plans to build a 240 mile-per-hour high-speed railway between Houston and Dallas, using Japanese Shinkansen technology, [received a significant boost](#) when it was endorsed by both President [Joe Biden](#) and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

According to developers, if completed, the rail line would cut the travel time between the two cities to just 90 minutes, making it quicker than flying once time at the airport is factored in.

The proposal is being worked on as a joint project between Amtrak, America's national passenger railroad company, and Dallas-based company Texas Central.

A study published in June 2021 by Webuild SpA, an Italian engineering company, estimated the Dallas-Houston high-speed rail line would produce \$36 billion in "economic direct impact for the region" over the next 25 years if constructed.

The report also claimed it would reduce the number of vehicles per day on the I-45 between Houston and Dallas by an average of 14,630 and slash CO2 emissions by 700,000 tons per year.

Separately, the North Central Texas Council of Government (NCTCOG) is pushing for a high-speed rail line [connecting Dallas and Fort Worth](#), though details remain vague.

Addressing a meeting on May 13, NCTCOG transportation planning manager Brendon Wheeler said the agency is looking for an outside partner to join the project, and said they hope to get National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) clearance in early 2025.

Speaking to *Newsweek*, Professor Ian Savage, director of the transportation and logistics program at Northwestern University, argued high-speed rail could be a good fit for Texas due to the state's geography.

He said: "Like many transportation economists, I have been skeptical of the case for high-speed rail in a geographically large and spread out country like the United States. However, I feel that there is a stronger case for it in the Texas triangle (Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, Austin, San Antonio) than in many other parts of the country. The distances are about perfect for rail travel at about 250 miles."

Savage continued: "The congestion on the highways between these cities has made driving increasingly undesirable at many hours of the day. The engineering challenges are far fewer than in, say, California due to generally flat terrain and a lack of mountains or river valleys to cross. The challenges are that there is extensive air service in these markets at generally attractive prices, and an increased presence of bus lines at all price points."

Joshua Blank, director of research for the University of Texas at Austin's Texas Politics Project, told *Newsweek* high-speed rail could have a substantial impact on the state's business environment but warned it could spark tensions with rural property owners.

He said: "High-speed rail does have the potential to transform the state, if not in a global economic sense, at least as a hub for business by connecting two or more of the largest cities in the state and country.

"At the same time, the establishment of a rail system raises traditional conflicts in Texas that will be hard to overcome, including the interests of rural property owners whose land would be needed for the rail line against the interests of the major urban centers; the state's commitment to property rights and its related aversion to the perception, real or imagined, of government taking of land; and even the presence of potential foreign interests engaged in the construction of a high-speed rail line in Texas given a political climate notable for its recent hostility to foreign investment and influence in the state."

Speaking to *Newsweek* congressional correspondent Alex J. Rouhandeh, Senator Cornyn said: "We certainly need more transportation infrastructure in Texas. We're a big, growing state, and while the Texas Department of Transportation has done a lot in trying to build enough roads and highways to keep up, I think invariably things like high-speed rail come into play.

"But, as you know, there's some controversy associated with it because of concerns about landowners, eminent domain, and that's been something that's had to be sorted down. But now, I understand Amtrak and the federal government are the ones that are principally responsible, and I don't know how that's gonna play out, honestly. It's a very controversial topic."

Senator Cruz said the proposed high-speed rail lines "would create jobs and support the economy, but it needs to get the permitting and capital to go forward. But, If the project is completed, I'm sure a great many Texans would use it and appreciate an easy and fast way to travel between Houston and Dallas."

However, he added Texas would likely retain its car-focused culture, stating: "We Texans love our cars, love our trucks, but the trip between Houston and Dallas is one many Texans make regularly. My family is divided between Houston and Dallas, so I've made that trip my whole life. It's not a terrible drive, but it would certainly be more convenient to get on a high-speed rail."

Newsweek is committed to challenging conventional wisdom and finding connections in the search for common ground.

WFAA

AGGRESSIVE AND DISTRACTED DRIVING ARE ISSUES IN ALLEN AND COLLIN COUNTY. HERE'S WHAT THE CITY IS DOING TO END IT.

Allen Police responded to 3,222 crashes in 2023. Of those, nearly 600 resulted in an injury.

By Richard Solomon
May 23, 2024

ALLEN, Texas — If you want to get a glimpse of just how busy North Texas is, all you have to do is pick any stretch of road within [the city of Allen](#) or Collin County.

Traffic can be bumper to bumper at times, but the problem isn't the amount of people on the roadways; it's what they're doing behind the wheel.

In 2023, there were 3,222 crashes within Allen city limits according to Allen Police Chief Steve Dye. Chief Dye said that's roughly nine crashes a day. Out of those, nearly 600 resulted in some kind of injury.

"The number one complaint to my office is driving behavior, mainly speeding and distracted driving," Dye said. Last year, 27% of the officers killed in North Texas died of traffic-related injuries.

The problem of speeding and distracted driving is an issue the county is seeing as well.

"I can get out here within five minutes and catch somebody driving an excess of 100 miles an hour," said Collin County Sheriff Jim Skinner.

The sheriff said this year there have been 35 Texans who have died on county roads in a crash.

To fix the issue, the two have come together along with the help of the Texas Department of Public Safety and Allen Fire Department.

They're working on a three-phase initiative to crack down on distracted and aggressive driving in the city. Phase-1, which started May 1, placed more patrol officers along U.S, 75 and State Highway 121, two areas where speeding is a problem.

Officers and deputies are looking for drivers who are speeding, distracted, or doing other dangerous behaviors behind the wheel.

Dye says this will be in place until they see a change in driving patterns.

Police have issued 191 citations on freeways under the new initiative, he says.

"We're going to keep addressing the aggressive driving behaviors until the culture changes," Dye said.

Phase 2 will start in the summer. It will be a public awareness campaign led by the fire department followed by Phase 3, which will look at different engineering ways to calm traffic down.

In 2023, 27% of the officers killed in North Texas died of traffic-related injuries. Skinner said in order to make sure the roads within Allen are safe, people simply need to slow down.

"Slowing down is going to save lives," he said.

DALLAS MORNING NEWS

ROCKWALL MEGACHURCH DREW ONLINE BACKLASH FOR TRYING TO MANIPULATE TRAFFIC STUDY

Lakepointe Church says its senior leadership did not approve an email asking congregants to sign up for driving “shifts” around the church while traffic was being surveyed.

By Joy Ashford & Amber Gaudet
May 24, 2024



Cameras and other technology installed on traffic lights in Dallas, Texas, on July 2, 2021. (Jason Janik / Special Contributor)

A megachurch in Rockwall recently drew criticism online after an email from the church effectively asked congregants to manipulate a traffic study by driving “laps” in the area around the property.

Lakepointe Church was hoping to install a traffic light near its front entrance and had commissioned a study to measure traffic in the area as part of its application to the city, the church told [WFAA-TV \(Channel 8\)](#) in a statement.

On May 10, an email obtained by *The Dallas Morning News* was sent to church small-group leaders asking them to sign up for “shifts” where they would make 10 laps within an hour around a designated route. “WE NEED YOUR HELP to get a traffic light at the Ralph Hall entrance!”, the email said.

“Each shift is a commitment to drive the prescribed route 10 times within that hour shift,” the email added. “It’s great if you make more than 10 laps within the hour, but laps are only counted toward that specific shift.”

The email was posted to a [Rockwall Reddit page](#) and Rockwall Facebook group and drew criticism from online commenters. Shifts were scheduled to start on May 14, but the church told WFAA that it took down the sign-up sheet on May 11.

The church did not respond to several phone calls and emails from *The Dallas Morning News* seeking comment.

An ‘unfortunate decision’

In its statement to WFAA, the church said that on the afternoon of Friday, May 10, “a staff member made the unfortunate decision to attempt to sign up people from within Lakepointe to positively impact the count. That decision was made without knowledge by senior executive leadership at Lakepointe and the sign-up list was immediately taken down (on Saturday) as we were made aware of what occurred.”

In its statement, Lakepointe also said it had always planned to pay for the full cost of the traffic light if the city approved it.

Lakepointe [has over 20,000 weekly attendees](#) at six D-FW locations, according to its website.

According to [Religion News Service](#), some church pastors signed up for shifts on the sheet shared in the email. Tim Smith, senior executive pastor at Lakepointe, did not answer questions from *Religion News Service* about why church staff, including the pastor of the Rockwall campus, signed up for shifts.

When reached for comment by *The News*, Rockwall City Manager Mary Smith sent a statement explaining the city’s response to reports of Lakepointe’s attempt to manipulate the traffic study.

“The City of Rockwall was made aware of an email that went to Lakepointe Church members and communicated the City’s decision to not accept the results of Lakepointe Church’s study,” Smith’s statement read. “Lakepointe Church has taken the initiative to suspend their study and postpone the project.”

“The City of Rockwall will revisit the issue of a new study later in the year. The City will use their own traffic consultant to perform an independent study,” Smith went on.

Federal law dictates that an intersection meet certain criteria for a traffic signal to be installed, which is why government agencies frequently commission traffic studies at problematic intersections. But anyone can hire a third-party engineer to conduct one.

“The private sector can do whatever studies they wish, and the city may or may not take the recommendation seriously, but sometimes that does result in the addition of a traffic signal,” said Randy Machemehl, professor of transportation engineering at the University of Texas at Austin.

But if a signal gets installed based on faulty traffic data, Machemehl said, it’s unlikely to remain up for long.

“If the [traffic] volume decreases, for whatever reason, at a location that once justified a signal, according to the law the signal is supposed to be removed,” he said. Illegally installing or keeping a signal in place that isn’t warranted could also make a city liable for any crashes that occur at an intersection.

‘Terrible’ traffic after services

Riley Reann Dennis, who attends Lakepointe Church in Rockwall, told *The News* in a Facebook message that “the traffic everywhere around Lakepointe after services is terrible,” noting it can take 30 minutes to leave the area.

Jimmie Graves, a police officer who lives in Fate, has attended Lakepointe for about three years, he said. He had not heard about the traffic study until he was contacted by *The News*. “I just would be shocked to find out they actually told people to drive around and inflate numbers,” he said.

“If it were to be true, I probably wouldn’t go to the church,” he added.

This isn’t the first time this year that Lakepointe has been at the center of controversy. In [February](#), senior pastor Josh Howerton gave a sermon where he made what he called an “old preacher joke” about couples having sex on their wedding night. A portion of the joke — where Howerton told women to “stand where he tells you to stand, wear what he tells you to wear and do what he tells you to do” — drew significant criticism from women online.

Howerton was also criticized for [allegedly plagiarizing](#) his subsequent apology for that joke after social media users pointed out word-for-word similarities to an apology by a Florida pastor in 2022. In response to that backlash, [Howerton said](#) the Florida pastor had called him beforehand and helped him with his apology.

'TRAFFIC HELL' OR 'THE HEART' OF FAR NORTH DALLAS? THE FIGHT OVER PEPPER SQUARE

As D-FW grows, what will Dallas neighborhoods look like? Will sprawl push out? Will towers loom?

By Nick Wooten
May 31, 2024



A family walks out of a Trader Joe's grocery store at Pepper Square shopping center in Dallas, on Saturday, May 11, 2024. There are proposed changes to update the aging shopping center into a mixed use property with residential units, office buildings, restaurants and green space. (Ben Torres / Special Contributor)

The opening salvos have been fired in what could be a bitter Far North Dallas zoning battle.

Developer Henry S. Miller submitted plans to city staff late last month outlining its wishes to add 1,550 apartments to Pepper Square, a sagging beige shopping center buoyed by a Trader Joe's and a hopping indoor trampoline park on the city's northern reaches.

Why This Story Matters

As North Texas' population boom continues, developers, residents and communities across the Metroplex must decide how to house newcomers. Mixed-use developments in areas with aging retail offer a possible solution, but residents who live in nearby single-family home communities may oppose projects like this because of concerns with congestion, crime and other issues. We explore the tension that comes with growth.

Plans have been in the works for years, but residents from nearby neighborhood associations oppose any residential units at the site, citing traffic concerns and plans for thousands of other apartments nearby.

Others are more optimistic about the redevelopment, arguing projects like this could allow the city to better absorb the influx of newcomers while giving the retail strip a much-needed facelift.

The fight is not the first or the last of its kind here as residents seek to shape the future of their own spaces. North Texas must reckon with the consequences of its explosive growth. Choices must be made.

Will the residents of Dallas welcome towers looming over their rooftops? Or will the tide of sprawl push the Metroplex's boundaries further?

Ask the nearby residents about Pepper Square.

They'll tell you that at its worst, more new apartments could doom Far North Dallas to "traffic hell." At its best, the development near one of the region's busiest thoroughfares could breathe new life here.

It's unclear if the developer and residents who oppose the project will reach a compromise.

The project must clear its first hurdle — a June 20 City Planning and Zoning Commission hearing — before it reaches Dallas City Council.



Pepper Square shopping center signage in Dallas, on Saturday, May 11, 2024. There are proposed changes to update the aging shopping center into a mixed use property with residential units, office buildings, restaurants and green space. (Ben Torres / Special Contributor)

Miller Co. told *The Dallas Morning News* it is willing to make further concessions on apartment counts, but it's unclear if it will be enough for those who live nearby.

Neighborhood association leaders met with District 11 Councilwoman Jaynie Schultz late last month to voice their issues with the proposal. Residents have told *The News* they may pack city meetings to voice opposition.

“(North Texas’) population is increasing. We have the highest growth in the country,” said Sriram Villupuram, director of the University of Texas at Arlington’s Ryan-Reilly Center for Urban Land Utilization. “The next question is ... where do we put these people? Do you want to put them far away from work? Or do we want to put them in areas that are developed (and) try to increase density when an opportunity like Pepper Square arises?”

What are the plans for Pepper Square?

There are layers to Pepper Square, that triangular-shaped parcel of land near the intersection of Preston and Belt Line Roads.

The land had been in Ben McCutchin’s family since the 1940s. Ben’s father, an oil man, drilled for tycoon H.L. Hunt during the East Texas boom and moved to the Dallas area around 1941.

The McCutchins had a two-story colonial home on 250 acres of farmland. There were horses and cattle. They grew corn, cotton and rice. Ben remembers catching rides on the farmer’s tractor.

They made a baseball field on the front lawn for neighborhood kids. And the Fields family — of North Texas oil, ranching and banking fame — were neighbors to the south.

Ben and his three brothers developed the Pepper Square shopping center and apartments across the road in the 1970s as early neighborhoods in Far North Dallas began to spring up — well before the twisting tollways and the sprawl of a [new millennium pushed the region’s population over 8 million](#).

Pepper Square’s first tenant was grocer Tom Thumb, said McCutchin, 78, who currently serves as an executive vice president at commercial real estate firm Younger Partners.

“It was just really rural out there at the time,” he told *The News*. “There was nobody to really raise Cain because there wasn’t really anybody living out there.”

The family eventually sold the development to Henry S. Miller Co. in the 1990s, McCutchin said.

If you stop at Pepper Square on a Saturday afternoon in 2024, you might see mothers in behemoth sports utility vehicles sandwich into the lot, lugging children by threes or fours.

Their destination — the Urban Air Trampoline and Adventure Park.

Handfuls of twenty- and thirty-somethings sniff fresh flowers out front at Trader Joe’s. Bearded men scarf down sweets at Yonutz! Donuts and Ice Cream. Couples flock to the patio of a warmly lit Mediterranean restaurant behind the 7-Eleven. The Hobby Lobby is a hive of activity, too.

But take a few turns and you’ll see something new.

In the belly of the retail strip, there are fewer signs under the rust-orange metal roof. The stores are empty now. The parking lot of what once was a Stein Mart is now a vast sea of concrete.

Miller Co. wants to gussy it all up. Enter the modernist luxury apartments and over 25,000 square feet of new retail.

The apartments will be split over three buildings with a 12-story tower holding more than half of the proposed units.

The Trader Joe's and Hobby Lobby that anchor the shopping center will remain and the beloved Pepper Square Cleaners will still be there to handle shirt-starching needs.

By the time it's fully built out in 2033, there will be roughly 67,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space.

To make it happen, Miller Co. must get a zoning change for Pepper Square from a commercial retail district to a planned development district based on mixed-use zoning. They hope it will serve as a model for future developments in Dallas by making the best use of existing urban spaces.

Hal Watson, president of Henry S. Miller's multi-family housing division, told *The News* that developments like this reduce the need for further expansion into the Dallas-Fort Worth suburbs.

"Our goal has been to propose a project that not only meets our vision but also addresses the wants and needs of the community," Watson said in an email.



An empty parking outside of what used to be a Stein Mart at Pepper Square in Dallas, on Saturday, May 11, 2024.

There are proposed changes to update the aging shopping center into a mixed use property with residential units, office buildings, and restaurants. The empty parking lot could be site for green space. (Ben Torres / Special Contributor)

The details of this plan are subject to change as it makes its way through the city planning commission and city council.

The challenge in Far North Dallas is the area has a “significant amount” of aging retail, and the city has a “desperate need” for more housing, Schultz said.

Still, she said she understands why residents might be opposed to the project.

“It’s a crossroads in time that I liken to the days when all that farmland out there was being covered with houses,” she said. “And now those seas of rooftops that have been complacent for 50 years are suddenly seeing taller rooftops coming at them, and it’s very threatening.”

The first signs of trouble

While the developer wants 1,550 luxury apartments with the latest fineries, residents in nearby neighborhoods are unwilling to see a unit built.

Some have indicated they’d tolerate a smaller development with 400 or fewer units, but it’s unclear if Henry S. Miller would commit to that. Watson declined to answer further questions about the company’s possible concessions. Schultz told *The News* she is “committed to negotiating for a lower number.”

In a recent survey of homeowners associations near the retail strip, about 91% of the 1,100 responses said a development with 400 or more apartments is “not acceptable.”



A rendering showing new apartments proposed at the Pepper Square shopping center in Far North Dallas(Courtesy of MasterPlan rendering)

The survey was conducted by the Pepper Square Neighborhood Coalition, a group of roughly 20 homeowners or neighborhood associations concerned with the proposed redevelopment.

Based on the group's research, most of the 16 complexes close to the shopping center range from two to three stories. None match the proposed density of Pepper Square's proposed redevelopment.

Meeting in the middle will be difficult for residents like Gary Lawson, who said he couldn't support 800 or 900 units at Pepper Square during a meeting with Schultz and other neighborhood association members last month. Lawson wants the Miller Company to cut the unit count even further.

"I'm not opposed to progress," Lawson told *The News*. "We have a choice. We can grow. We can improve. But if Dallas wants to become Houston, the only way they'll do that is to put in high rises. Well, go put in a high-rise somewhere else, not in my neighborhood."

Residents opposed to the redevelopment of Pepper Square cite several factors, ranging from traffic concerns to questions about the need for these new apartments.

The signs of a potential zoning war first bubbled over during a contentious public meeting in March.

Natalie LeVeck was in the crowd. Her father stayed current on what was happening with Pepper Square, often giving her updates about the planned redevelopment. She has an interest in the retail complex as well.

LeVeck and her husband, Damien, own a home near Bert Fields Park — less than a mile from Pepper Square. She often takes her children to the center's trampoline park and swimming school.

She took her father's place during the March meeting, and she was upset by the way Schultz treated community members.

The meeting was billed as a community discussion, but residents expressed frustration at not being able to directly ask Schultz and others questions about the development, LeVeck said.

The crowd booed and yelled. There was shouting. Schultz said she was embarrassed, and one public official who attended told *The News* it was the worst public meeting they've seen.

Damien LeVeck, who has a background in various movie and television productions, shot video at the meeting and uploaded clips to social media with eye-popping titles.

"Jaynie won't argue 'facts'" is one. Another reads: "Jaynie Schultz to Constituents: You don't have a choice."

The husband and wife duo launched a website promoting a recall of the District 11 representative. No formal notice of recall has been filed with the city yet, but Schultz's actions have strengthened the resolve of those opposed to the project, Natalie LeVeck said.

"People are so adamant that we can't lose the rezoning battle because our representative is not in our corner," she said. "(Schultz) literally does not care. Surveys don't make a difference. People screaming at a meeting doesn't make a difference. She doesn't want to hear from people."

Schultz told The News in multiple interviews she wants residents to be engaged and help shape Pepper Square's future.

Does Far North Dallas need apartments?

LeVeck is among those who don't want apartments at Pepper Square. She'd prefer the shopping center remain retail only. But she'd also like to see it get a refresh and add dining options.

"I don't believe the narrative that we need another 1,500 apartments because there are vacancies all over our district," she said. "People on Nextdoor have said it's in the thousands because people are flocking to the suburbs, because it's less expensive. You want a luxury apartment, you want to go Uptown or Highland Park. When we talk to young people, they don't want to move to Preston and Belt Line in the middle of the city with nothing around them."

More than 181,000 apartments have been built in Dallas in the last decade, the most of any market in the country, according to data from Richardson-based property management firm RealPage.

Yet Far North Dallas was one of a handful of areas that added very few new units during this time. While there's a current oversupply of apartments in D-FW, [building has slowed](#). Demand will outpace supply in D-FW by late 2025 or early 2026.

Of the 55 apartment properties in Far North Dallas, only 10 are Class A — apartments of the highest quality with the latest amenities and features. Most of Far North Dallas' apartments are average or low quality while the area's median income is near \$100,000, according to CoStar.

That data suggests the neighborhood could support a project like this, said Villupuram, the UTA professor who lives in Far North Dallas.

"I haven't seen any apartment construction in this area in a long time," he said. "I've been living here for ten years, and not that much."

The other new apartments coming to Far North Dallas

Two other residential projects are in the works near Pepper Square.

The first is planned renovations at Preston del Norte, an apartment complex on the northwest corner of Beltline and Preston owned by Canadian company Terracap. The project received approval from the Dallas City Council in October 2022.

The City Council approved up to 2,300 units. However, the plan is to completely demolish 365 aging garden-style apartments and replace them with up to 1,500 units, said Michael Kottwitz, president of Fairmont Management Company. He is Terracap's local representative.

The project will be done in phases, and the third phase of the project could be a "mini-tower" close to the Prestonwood County Club's golf course between seven and 10 stories tall, Kottwitz said.

There would be no new development on the property for at least two to three years, and it would take 10 to 15 years for the apartments to be completely finished.

But there are a lot of details still to be decided, and economic conditions may push the planned project back further.

“While interest rates are kind of high, and there’s not a whole lot going on right now. It might make sense... to at least have some kind of development plan so that we could get an idea of construction cost,” Kottwitz said. “The desire and the appetite is there. We’re just trying to find the right time.”

The second project is headed by Tonti Properties on roughly 45 acres of greenspace at Preston and Alexis roads near Bert Fields [Park](#).

No zoning change is required. However, the final designs haven’t been completed.

Tonti has owned the Meadows on Preston property for nine years, said Adam Auensen, the Vice President of Acquisitions and Development at Tonti Properties.

The plan is for a gated community with a mixture of luxury townhomes and multifamily units. When asked how many units would be built, Auensen said the company doesn’t have an exact count or other related information.

“Large greenfield sites like this — in Dallas and on Preston Road — are rare and this is a unique opportunity for us to create a timeless community,” Auensen said in an email. “ We are being very intentional.”

The influx of residents at these projects brings concerns about how city services can handle the area’s growth, said Janet Marcum, the president of the Northwood Hills Homeowners Association.

She cited understaffing at the city’s police and fire departments as a particular issue.

“We’re not thinking there’s going to be violent crime or anything like that,” she said. “We’re a little concerned about response times to the neighborhoods and having to call in police and fire from other areas to help this area if we have too many calls.”

Traffic hell?

Another primary reason for the opposition is traffic. More people means more traffic, LeVeck said.

On an average weekday, the light delay at Preston and Beltline is 28.3 seconds, according to data from the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG).

“My biggest concern as someone who has to drive on that block every day — multiple times a day — is the traffic and how difficult that light is,” she said. “We’re now at a point where residents feel like they lost the Tonti and Preston Del Norte fights. So are we going to lose this one too, and then all of our lives are going to be traffic hell 10 years from now?”

Roughly 50,000 vehicles a day travel along Preston Road, and most of them drive past Pepper Square. More than 63% of the traffic within four miles of the shopping center are through-trips, according to NCTCOG data.

Traffic simulations show only a slight increase if all of the planned apartments in the area are developed, said Micheal Morris, the group’s transportation director.

“The traffic is about the same, a hair higher,” Morris said. “Your roadway can only take so much traffic anyway.”

However, commuters from the north would find alternate routes. Those who don’t live in Far North Dallas would avoid the Pepper Square area because it would slow their commute. The Dallas North Toll Road and Coit Road to the Central Expressway would be popular routes for drivers from the northern suburbs, he said.



Signage opposing rezoning at Pepper Square shopping center on display along Preston Road outside of Williamsburg Estates in Dallas, on Saturday, May 11, 2024 in Dallas. The proposed changes will include residential, retail, restaurant and green space. (Ben Torres / Special Contributor)

There are also Preston Road improvements on the horizon, even if the Pepper Square redevelopment isn’t approved, Morris said.

New lanes won’t be added, but traffic signals will be updated to read demand and allow green-light time adjustments on the fly. Sidewalks will be fixed, and there will be better pedestrian controls. Morris estimated the improvements would cost \$25 million to \$30 million.

These high-density developments can help the region by giving people more options for living within the city limits, he said. [D-FW led the nation’s metro areas](#) in estimated population gains last year, but nearly all of that growth was from outlying suburban counties, according to the latest U.S. Census estimates.

Sprawl means money spent on freeways and thoroughfares further from the urban core. And that’s not sustainable, Morris said.

“I need to infill the center of the center of the region as best I can,” he said. “I need density. Otherwise, I’m going to be spending millions and millions of dollars almost all the way to the Red River.”

It could be ‘the heart’ of Far North Dallas

Sean Jensen, the president of Prestonwood Trail Neighborhood Association, knows the traffic will likely get worse with redevelopment. But the self-proclaimed data freak who has lived in the neighborhood since 2000 sees potential in the proposed changes.

“I can’t say I’m won over,” he said. “I do, however, see inevitability. There’s an owner of this space. They can either let it rot or they can do something about it. How much of an improvement they make... is probably correlated with how much of a profit they are going to make.”



Sean Jensen, president of the Prestonwood Trail Neighborhood Association, shown in an empty parking lot at the shopping center Pepper Square, on Saturday, May 11, 2024 in Dallas. There are plans to update the aging shopping center with residential units, retail, restaurants and green space. (Ben Torres / Special Contributor)

He’d like to see Pepper Square be a “holistic immersive development” where residents can live, work and play in the same space. He also sees this as a moment when residents can influence what the shopping center will become.

“It has the potential to be the heart of the entire North Dallas area,” he said. “It has the potential to be a place that people want to be.”

The Pepper Square redevelopment would be a major part of the efforts to eventually link trails from Dallas to the rest of the region, developers said.

It starts with connecting White Rock Creek trail to Far North Dallas. The White Rock Creek trail currently ends at the northeast corner of Northwood Club. The city wants to connect the trail to Bert Fields Park, just to the northwest.

The trail would continue north through Tonti's Meadows on Preston property and then through Pepper Square. A path between Pepper Square and Kiowa Park on Arapaho Road already exists.

Henry S. Miller estimates the extension would give an additional 90,000 residents access to the network of pathways as Far North Dallas grows.

The trails coupled with new retail and restaurants would be a boom, Jensen said, as the community next to Pepper Square is well-established and one that supports local businesses.

But it's unclear if the parks and trail will happen if the unit count is significantly decreased.

Still, some elements give Jensen pause. He worries the project could be like everything else, just a higher-valued development that changes hands in a decade.

"But I want to be dramatically wrong," Jensen said. "I'll keep encouraging a more interesting outcome while there's still time. ...I don't know what Miller will be doing with this place."

As Jensen holds out hope, others brace for battle.

Banners emblazoned with "no rezoning" are hung in neighborhoods near the shopping center. The call to arms is out.

Henry S. Miller marches on, seeking to avoid a bitter brouhaha.

For now, Pepper Square is stuck between potential futures.



Signage opposing rezoning at Pepper Square shopping center on display along Preston Road outside of Williamsburg Estates in Dallas, on Saturday, May 11, 2024 in Dallas. The proposed changes will include residential, retail, restaurant and green space. (Ben Torres / Special Contributor)

CBS NEWS

NORTH TEXAS LEADERS SORTING THROUGH LOGISTICS FOR 2026 FIFA WORLD CUP

By Madison Sawyer

May 30, 2024

DALLAS — Leaders sat down for a panel discussion to plan out all of the logistics to bring one of the world's largest events to North Texas.

Dallas will be hosting [nine matches](#) during the 2026 FIFA World Cup, including the coveted semi-final, at AT&T Stadium.

Monica Paul with the Dallas Sports Commission, Arlington Mayor Jim Ross and Michael Morris with the North Central Texas Council of Governments are expecting hundreds of thousands of people to travel here to see these matches, which will be an economic boom that's equivalent to hosting multiple Super Bowls within a couple of weeks time.

RELATED: [North Texas footballer's thrill for 2026 FIFA matches in Arlington layered with familiarity](#)

And with an event of this magnitude, safety and security are obviously top of mind.

"We coordinate all of the safety measures with regional partnerships, with other local police and law enforcement agencies here, with state agencies and with federal agencies," Ross said. "We hold no punches when it comes to tapping into the experts and keeping our communities safe."

RELATED: [North Texas businesses ramping up for World Cup 2 years away](#)

Mayor Ross said that they wouldn't have been trusted with nine games if FIFA didn't think they could keep everyone safe. In fact, leaders have been using events at AT&T Stadium as test runs for the World Cup.

There were hundreds of thousands of people moving in and out of the Arlington Entertainment District when Taylor Swift came to Arlington for her Eras World Tour. So, organizers used it as an opportunity to figure out which transportation systems needed upgrading. They decided they're going to upgrade some of the locomotives on some of our rail transportation that were already probably going to be upgraded after the World Cup. They're just expediting the process so that when the World Cup rolls into town, all systems will operate smoothly.



North Central Texas Council Of Governments

May 17, 2024

Mr. Al Alonzi
 Division Administrator
 Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – Texas Division
 300 East 8th Street, Room 826
 Austin, TX 78701

Dear Mr. Alonzi:

Subject: Bridging Highway Divides for DFW Communities Project

This letter is to request a change of grantee for the above grant awarded to the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). The initial application, dated September 27, 2023, was submitted for award by NCTCOG under the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Grant Program for transportation facility-related components of four pedestrian caps in regionally significant locations. NCTCOG applied, in partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), with the specific intent for TxDOT to be the project's RCN Grant Program grantee and implementing agent. On March 13, 2024, the US Department of Transportation notified NCTCOG its application was selected for award.

The Texas Department of Transportation has been involved in the development of the project since the initiation and continues to be a strong supporter of the project. TxDOT has fully supported the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant Program application for this project. Since the projects are on the state highway system, TxDOT will be the implementing agency for the projects.

NCTCOG formally requests TxDOT to be the grantee for the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods grant for the Bridging Highway Divides for DFW Communities Project. Attached is a letter from the TxDOT Executive Director supporting this request. If you need additional information, please contact me at (817) 695-9241 or mmorris@nctcog.org.

Sincerely,


 Michael Morris, P.E.
 Director of Transportation

AL:tmb
 Attachments

cc: Ujval Patel, P.E., Sr. Area Engineer, FHWA
 Gionni Maze, P.E., Area Engineer, FHWA
 Marc D. Williams, P.E., Executive Director, TxDOT
 Trent W. Thomas, Director, Government Affairs Division, TxDOT
 Ceason Clemens, P.E., Dallas District Engineer, TxDOT
 Travis Campbell, P.E., Director of Transportation, Planning and Development, TxDOT



125 E 11th St | Austin, Texas 78701
512.463.8588
txdot.gov

May 16, 2024

Mr. Al Alonzi
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – Texas Division
300 East 8th Street, Room 826
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Mr. Alonzi:

This letter is to request a change of grantee for the *Bridging Highway Divides for DFW Communities Project* award to the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). The initial application was submitted for award by NCTCOG under the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Grant Program for transportation facility-related components of four pedestrian caps in regionally significant locations. NCTCOG applied, in partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation, with the specific intent for TxDOT to be the project's RCN Grant Program grantee and implementing agent. On March 13, 2024, the US Department of Transportation notified NCTCOG that its application was selected for award.

TxDOT has been involved in the development of the project since its initiation and continues to be a strong supporter of the project. Since the projects are on the state highway system, TxDOT will be the implementing agency for the projects. In coordination with NCTCOG, TxDOT requests it be named as the grantee for the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods grant for the *Bridging Highway Divides for DFW Communities Project*.

If you need additional information, please contact Travis Campbell P.E., Director of Transportation, Planning, and Development at (214) 320-6146 or travis.campbell@txdot.gov.

Sincerely,

Marc D. Williams, P.E.
Executive Director

cc: Ujval Patel, P.E. Sr. Area Engineer, FHWA
Gianni Maze, P.E., Area Engineer, FHWA
Trent W. Thomas, Director, Government Affairs Division, TxDOT
Ceason Clemens, P.E., Dallas District Engineer, TxDOT
Travis Campbell, P.E., Director of Transportation, Planning and Development, TxDOT
Michael Morris, P.E. Director of Transportation, NCTCOG

OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER
DISTRICT NO. 3



JOHN WILEY PRICE

May 03, 2024

RECEIVED

MAY 10 2024

TRANSPORTATION

John D. Jenkins, Director
Dallas Park and Recreation Department
1500 Marilla St. Suite 6FN
Dallas, TX 75201

RE: Southern Gateway Deck Park Phase 1 – Leadership, Funding and Challenges

Dear Mr. Jenkins:

As I continue to collaborate on this vital community project, there are specific roles and responsibilities to be identified to have a clear understanding of the project phases being designed and implemented. According to the recent updates received, Phase 1A is being managed by Southern Gateway Public Green Foundation and the full funding for Phase 1B has not been identified. I am requesting that you and/or your team address questions and suggestions below to ensure the remaining phases of Phase I project can be delivered as outlined in the attached schedule facilitated by Southern Gateway Public Green Foundation.

- According to the attached schedule provided, Phase 1B is scheduled to bid in September 2024. Who will be responsible for bidding Phase 1B?
- Have all agreements required to confirm the project funding, project lead to manage public funds been executed?
- Who will be responsible for any shortfall that occurs subject to bids for remaining phases when received?
- Have all Plans, Specifications and estimates along with required permits been approved by respective involved agencies to clear construction?
- As a reminder, as we discussed at the meeting on February 1st, 2024, regular Task Force meetings need to be scheduled among all agencies and stakeholders to keep all fully informed.

I would like to congratulate the entire team and especially NCTCOG's leadership on receiving an exciting "Reconnecting Communities Grant Program" Award for the Phase II Park. Dallas County remains supportive of the Southern Gateway Project and has committed \$2.47 Million to Ewing Ave that will improve access to the Dallas Zoo and the future Southern Gateway Deck Park. The Ewing Ave project will also make much needed storm drainage improvements to the corridor. I am hopeful that the Southern Gateway Foundation will be successful in meeting their schedule and securing the funding subject to approval by Dallas County Commissioners Court for this important project, but need to ensure that the key issues discussed in the February 1st meeting are not being overlooked.

May 03, 2024

Page 2

Under the leadership of Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn King Arnold, I jointly look forward to attending future meetings to collaborate in the efforts in completion of this vital project.

Sincerely,



John Wiley Price
Dallas County Commissioner, District #3

cc: Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn King Arnold, City of Dallas
Michael Morris, P.E., NCTCOG Director of Transportation
April Allen, President & CEO, Southern Gateway Public Green Foundation
Karla Windsor, AICP, NCTCOG Senior Program Manager
Christie J. Gotti, NCTCOG Senior Program Manager
Alberta Blair, P.E., Dallas County Public Works Director
John D. Jenkins, City of Dallas Park and Recreation Director
Ghassan Khankarli, P.E., City of Dallas Transportation Director
Nathan Petter, P.E., TxDOT Dallas County Area Office
Tushar Solanki, P.E., Dallas County Public Works Assistant Director
Jonathan Toffer, Dallas County Public Works Assistant Director
Micah Baker, AICP, Dallas County Mobility Manager



May 14, 2024

Mr. Michael Morris
Director of Transportation
North Central Texas Council of Governments
616 Six Flags Drive
Arlington, TX 76011

Dear Mr. Morris:

The Cities of Fort Worth and Benbrook request that the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) consider the acceleration of the RM-2871 roadway improvements project from I-30 to US-377.

This project is vital to the economic growth of both cities and supports planned development in both Tarrant and Parker Counties. We are aware this project is currently partially funded and construction is not estimated to occur until after 2026. However, significant commercial development is expected along RM-2871 between Aledo Road and I-20 within the next two years. Therefore, these improvements are needed sooner to accommodate greater traffic on this corridor and to improve overall safety and operations.

The Cities request that TxDOT coordinate with NCTCOG to identify funding sources and implementation strategies through project phasing or other means that would accelerate the construction of these improvements. Both the City of Fort Worth and the City of Benbrook are available, as necessary, with any city processes and oversight for this project.

Many thanks in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Crain
Councilmember – District 3
City of Fort Worth, Texas
817-392-8803

Jason Ward
Mayor
City of Benbrook, Texas
817-249-3000

CC: J. Bruce Bugg, Jr., Chairman, TxDOT
Marc Williams, Executive Director, TxDOT
Carl Johnson, P.E., Fort Worth District Engineer, TxDOT
Tim O'Hare, Tarrant County Judge
Roy Brooks, Tarrant County Commissioner
Manny Ramirez, Tarrant County Commissioner
Mike Hale, Parker County Commissioner
Jessica McEachern, Assistant City Manager, City of Fort Worth
Lauren Prieur, Director, Transportation and Public Works, City of Fort Worth
Kelly Porter, Assistant Director, Transportation and Public Works, City of Fort Worth

CITY OF FORT WORTH
100 FORT WORTH TRAIL
FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76102
(817)392-8803

CITY OF BENBROOK
911 WINSOTT ROAD
BENBROOK, TEXAS 76126
(817)249-3000



May 14, 2024

Mr. J. Bruce Bugg, Jr.
Chairman
Texas Department of Transportation
125 East 11th Street
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Chairman Bugg:

The Cities of Fort Worth and Benbrook request that the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) consider the acceleration of the RM-2871 roadway improvements project from I-30 to US-377.

This project is vital to the economic growth of both cities and supports planned development in both Tarrant and Parker Counties. We are aware this project is currently partially funded and construction is not estimated to occur until after 2026. However, significant commercial development is expected along RM-2871 between Aledo Road and I-20 within the next two years. Therefore, these improvements are needed sooner to accommodate greater traffic on this corridor and to improve overall safety and operations.

The Cities request that TxDOT coordinate with NCTCOG to identify funding sources and implementation strategies through project phasing or other means that would accelerate the construction of these improvements. Both the City of Fort Worth and the City of Benbrook are available, as necessary, with any city processes and oversight for this project.

Many thanks in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Crain
Councilmember – District 3
City of Fort Worth, Texas
817-392-8803

Jason Ward
Mayor
City of Benbrook, Texas
817-249-3000

CC: Michael Morris, Director of Transportation, North Texas Council of Governments
Marc Williams, Executive Director, TxDOT
Carl Johnson, P.E., Fort Worth District Engineer, TxDOT
Tim O'Hare, Tarrant County Judge
Roy Brooks, Tarrant County Commissioner
Manny Ramirez, Tarrant County Commissioner
Mike Hale, Parker County Commissioner
Jesica McEachern, Assistant City Manager, City of Fort Worth
Lauren Prieur, Director, Transportation and Public Works, City of Fort Worth
Kelly Porter, Assistant Director, Transportation and Public Works, City of Fort Worth

CITY OF FORT WORTH
100 FORT WORTH TRAIL
FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76102
(817)392-8803

CITY OF BENBROOK
911 WINS COTT ROAD
BENBROOK, TEXAS 76126
(817)249-3000



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

PRESS RELEASE
Contact: Brian Wilson
(817) 704-2511
bwilson@nctcog.org

NCTCOG to Offer Updates on High-Speed Rail, Other Planning Efforts May 13

Public comments to be accepted until June 11

May 7, 2024 (Arlington, TEXAS) – NCTCOG invites North Texans to provide their input on transportation and air quality matters during a hybrid public meeting May 13. The meeting is scheduled for noon at NCTCOG's Arlington offices, 616 Six Flags Drive. Residents can also watch the meeting live at publicinput.com/nctcogMay24 or participate via phone by dialing 855-925- 2801, then code 1234.

With the Federal Railroad Administration advancing the Corridor Identification and Development program for intercity passenger rail around the nation, the Dallas-to-Fort Worth High-Speed Rail project is positioned for potential federal funding support as planning activities continue. Additionally, this project continues to gain momentum regionally as discussions of fine-tuning alignment locations occur and the project enters the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis phase.

NCTCOG continues to work to fund the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a list of transportation projects with committed federal, state and local funding. Staff will present an overview of the TIP development process and provide the TIP document, which includes a draft list of regional active projects.

Air quality also continues to be a significant focus in North Texas. Ten Dallas-Fort Worth area counties are in nonattainment for ozone pollution, and NCTCOG is monitoring a potential change by the Environmental Protection Agency of another criteria pollutant – particulate matter. In February, the EPA changed the national air quality standards for particulate matter from 12.0 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) to 9.0 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Because of these changes, Dallas and Tarrant County may not meet the new particulate matter standard. The EPA is expected to make a final decision in 2026. Staff will present additional information about the new standard.

Proposed amendments to Mobility 2045 – 2022 Update will be available online for review and comment. NCTCOG's Spatial Data Cooperative Program, air quality programs and funding opportunities, [Try Parking It](#) and administrative revisions to Mobility 2045 – 2022 Update will also be highlighted.

Roundtrip rides from the Centerport/DFW Airport Station to NCTCOG are available on VIA for \$6 through city.ridewithvia.com/arlington. For special accommodation due to disabilities or language interpretation, contact 817-695-9255 or email jcastillo@nctcog.org. Public comments will be accepted until June 11 and can be made at publicinput.com/nctcogMay24.

About the North Central Texas Council of Governments:

NCTCOG is a voluntary association of local governments established in 1966 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. NCTCOG serves a 16-county region of North Central Texas, which is centered in the two urban centers of Dallas and Fort Worth. Currently, NCTCOG has 228 member governments including 16 counties, 169 cities, 19 school districts and 27 special districts. For more information on the Transportation Department, visit www.nctcog.org/trans.

About the Regional Transportation Council:

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) of the North Central Texas Council of Governments has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for regional transportation planning in the Dallas-Fort Worth area since 1974. The MPO works in cooperation with the region's transportation providers to address the complex transportation needs of the rapidly growing metropolitan area. The Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area includes Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant and Wise counties. The RTC's 45 members include local elected or appointed officials from the metropolitan area and representatives from each of the area's transportation providers. More information can be found at www.nctcog.org.

###



North Central Texas
Council of Governments



PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Brian Wilson
(817) 704-2511
bwilson@nctcog.org

Kimberlin To
(817) 608-2362
kto@nctcog.org

Commit to Cleaner North Texas Air on June 7

Improve health, clean the air, take the pledge

May 30, 2024 (Arlington, TEXAS) – June is historically the time of year when air quality across the Dallas-Fort Worth area is thrust to the forefront of people’s minds. With summer temperatures settling in, this is typically when the region begins experiencing days with elevated levels of ozone pollution.

Prolonged exposure to elevated concentrations of ground-level ozone may result in health issues such as reduced lung function, more asthma episodes and less resistance to respiratory infections, according to clinical studies.

North Texans can do their part to boost the region’s air quality without making significant changes. Clean Air Action Day will take place on June 7 this year. This is the annual day when North Texas residents, businesses and governments are encouraged to make slight changes to their routines that might help enhance air quality throughout Dallas-Fort Worth.

There are many ways people can make a difference in regional air quality. They can avoid commuting entirely by working from home. If they must go to the office, they can find an alternative commute, such as carpooling or using transit. Limiting unnecessary idling and taking lunch to work can also help. Governments are encouraged to consider implementing strategies in three categories: public services, programs and enforcement, and communication with employees. Businesses can help through operations, communication with employees or vehicle operations.

Ten counties in the region (Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant and Wise) are in nonattainment for ozone, and Air North Texas is one way the North Central Texas Council of Governments works to ensure air quality remains a focal point throughout the transportation planning process.

For a full list of clean air strategies individuals, businesses and governments can enact to help the region move closer to attainment, and to take the pledge to complete one action to benefit regional air quality, visit www.airnorthtexas.org/cleanairactionday. Signing up for air quality alerts at www.airnorthtexas.org/signup can keep you informed of when action is recommended.

Additionally, Dallas and Tarrant counties face the potential of being declared in nonattainment for particulate matter, commonly called soot, following the federal government's announcement it would toughen the standard from 12.0 micrograms per cubic meter to 9.0 micrograms per cubic meter. The change is anticipated to take place in 2026.

North Texans are encouraged to maintain their Clean Air Action Day commitments made on June 7 throughout all of ozone season, which ends Nov. 30. Be sure to use #CAAD2024 and tag us on social media to show your commitment to clean air in your community and to get others involved.

Start taking steps to ensure better air quality for all North Texans by choosing the clean air strategy that works for you. Every small change made can have an impact on quality of life throughout the region.

About the North Central Texas Council of Governments:

NCTCOG is a voluntary association of local governments established in 1966 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.

NCTCOG serves a 16-county region of North Central Texas, which is centered on the two urban centers of Dallas and Fort Worth. Currently, NCTCOG has 238 member governments including 16 counties, 169 cities, 19 school districts and 27 special districts. For more information on the NCTCOG Transportation Department, visit www.nctcog.org/trans.

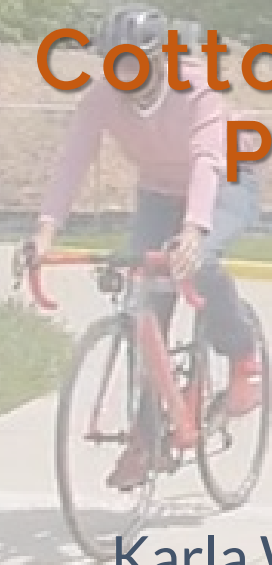
About Air North Texas:

Air North Texas is a regional air quality partnership and general public outreach effort. Air North Texas leverages existing resources and program strengths to offer the public a comprehensive resource for air quality information. Collaborative efforts focus on reducing harmful emissions, protecting public health and welfare, motivating residents to make choices that improve air quality and preserving the economic vitality of the region. Learn more at www.airnorthtexas.org.

###

Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program Grant Application

Cotton Belt Trail Phase 3a



Karla Windsor

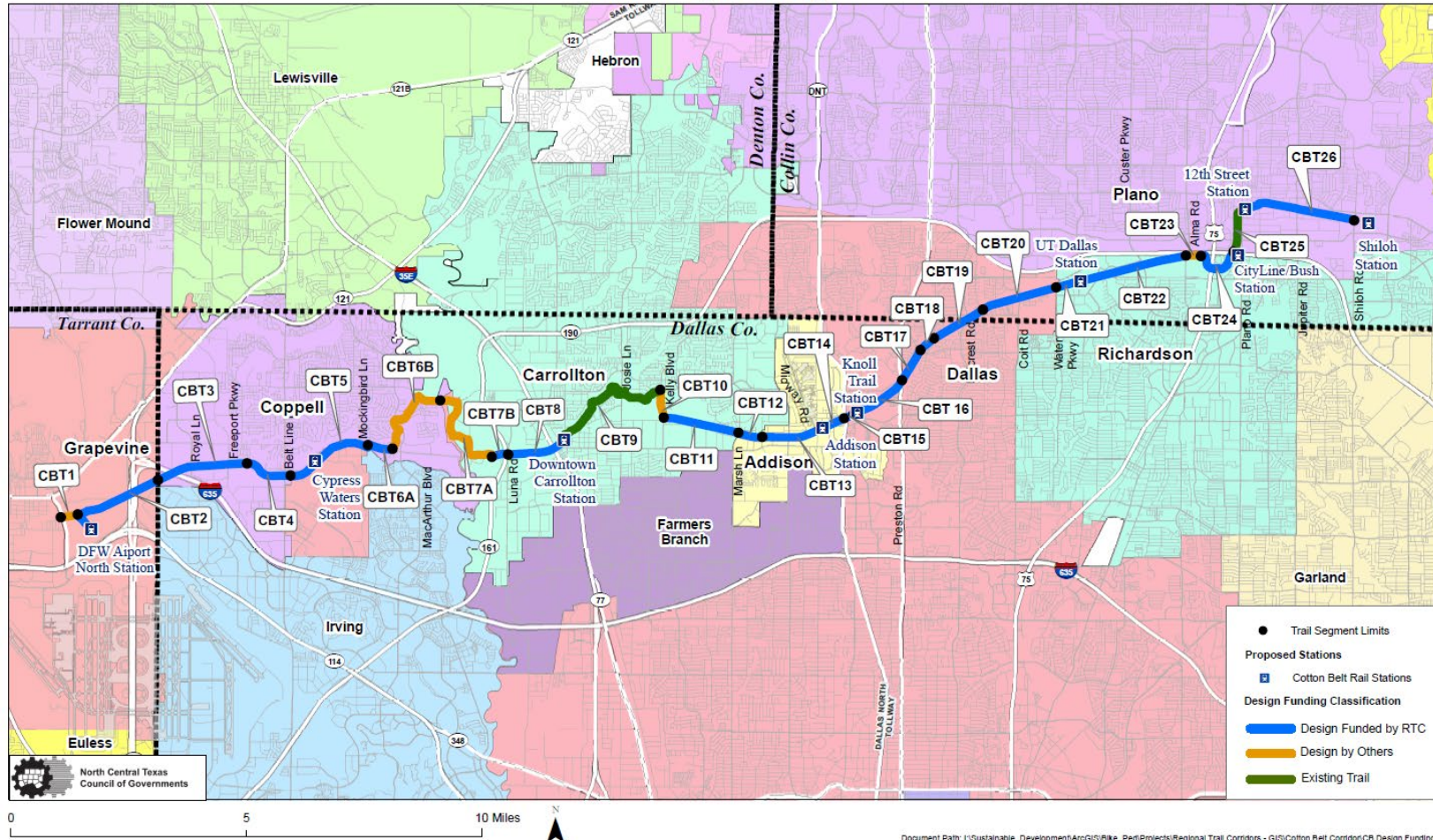
Regional Transportation Council

June 13, 2024



History

Cotton Belt Regional Veloweb Trail: DFW Airport to Plano
Trail Design Funding



- Regional priority
- Seven cities in three counties
- 24+ miles of trail
- DART partnership to implement with the Silver Line Rail
- Engineering design currently underway
- Increasing construction costs

Phase 1 and Phase 2 Construction

Phase 1 Silver Line Rail Design/Build Contractor: **UNDERWAY**

Critical Bridges in Dallas and Plano

Trail Intersection Crossings of Silver Line Rail line

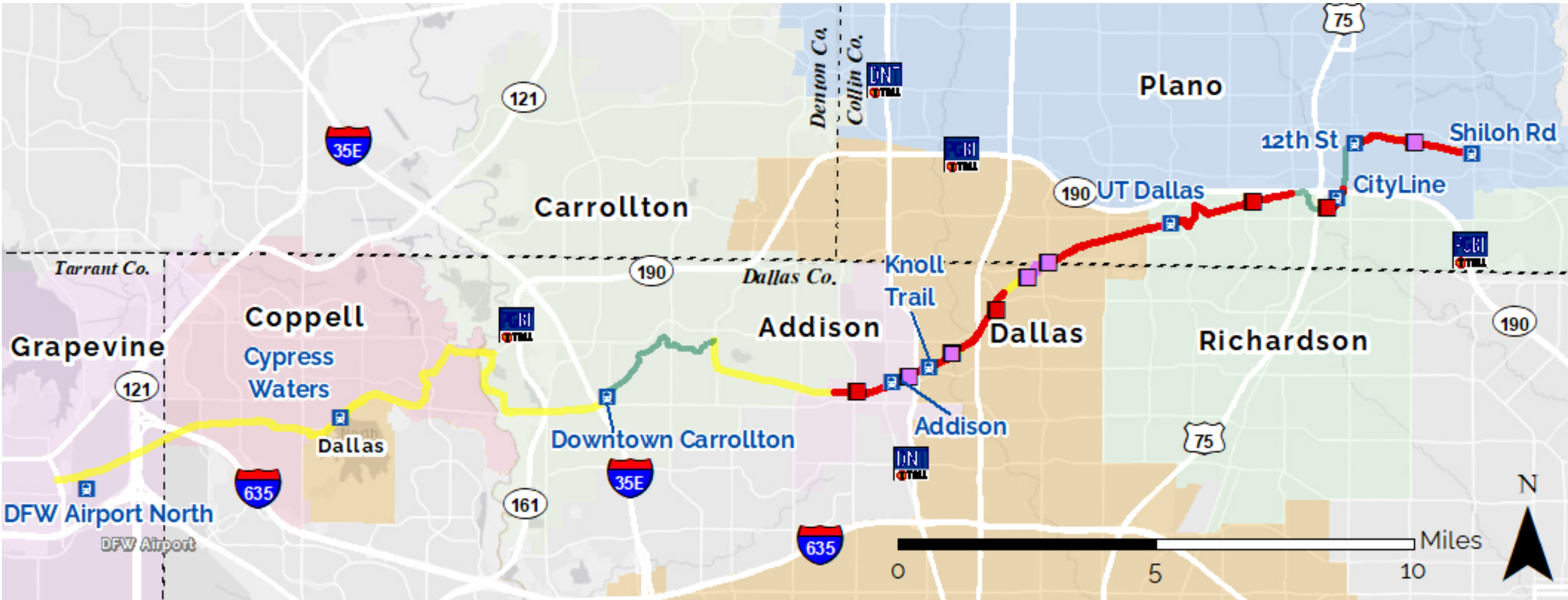
Phase 2 Trail Contractor: **BEGIN LATE 2024**

Funding Approach

Approx. 11 miles of Trail, Bridges and Approaches, and Signals (Addison to Plano)

- Various RTC funding awards 2018-2022
- 2022 NCTCOG TA Call for Projects
- 2023 USDOT RAISE Grant
- 2023 TxDOT Statewide Transportation Alternatives Program Call for Projects

Anticipated Cotton Belt Trail Construction Phasing



- Existing Trail
- Phase 1: Cotton Belt Trail and Bridges
- Phase 2: Cotton Belt Trail and Bridges
- Phase 3: Cotton Belt Trail and Bridges
- Silver Line Rail Station

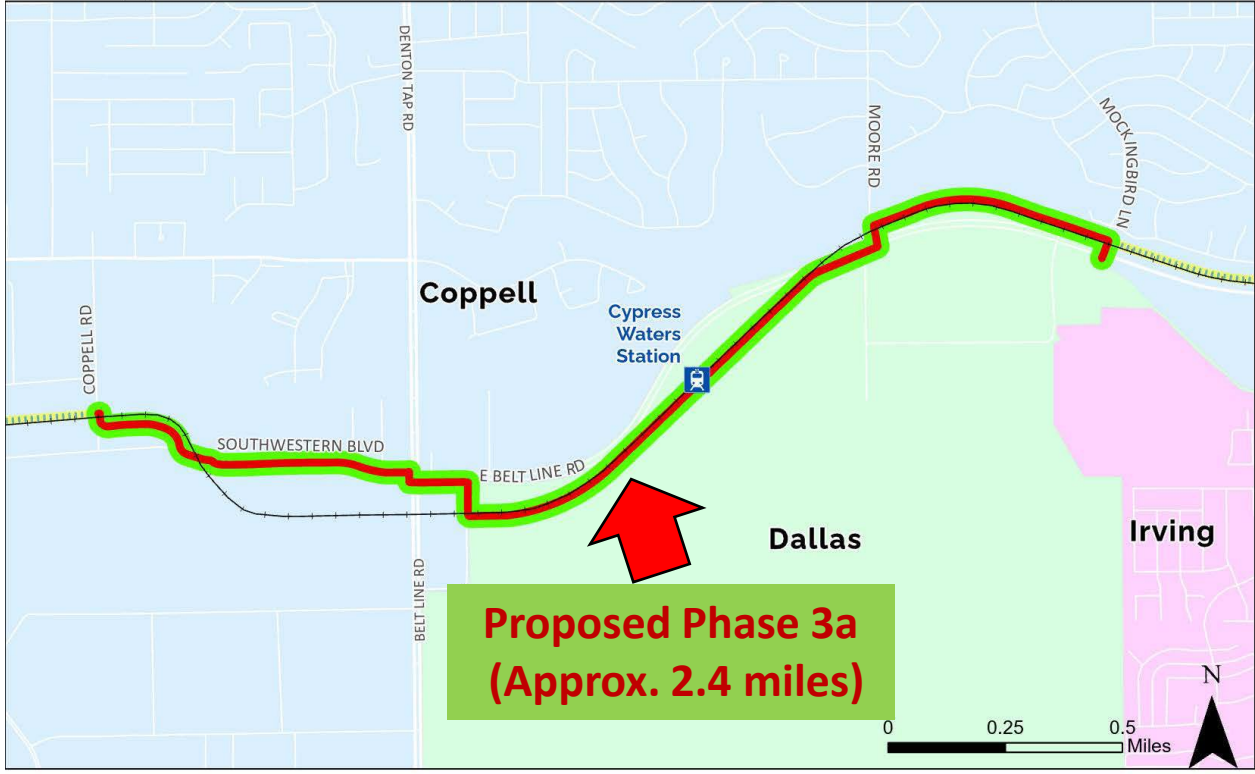
Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP) Priorities

- Active Transportation “Spines” (e.g., “rail-with-trail”)
- Safety, efficiency, and reliability of active transportation networks and communities;
- Improve connectivity between active transportation modes and public transportation; and
- Improve quality of life in disadvantaged communities through the delivery of connected active transportation networks and expanded mobility opportunities






Phase 3a: ATIP Grant Application (Project Segments)



Coppell/Dallas Segment (Coppell Rd to Mockingbird Ln)



Addison Segment (Marsh Ln to East of Surveyor Blvd)



-  Proposed Phase 3a Segments
-  Phase 2 Segments
-  Trail Designed - To be funded by other sources

-  Silver Line Rail Station
-  Silver Line Rail Under Construction

Phase 3a: ATIIIP Grant Application (Draft Budget)

PROJECT SCOPE	COST / FUNDING				
DESCRIPTION/LIMITS	TOTAL COST	EXISTING FEDERAL FUNDS (Programmed)	EXISTING LOCAL FUNDS (Programmed)	ATIIP FEDERAL GRANT FUNDS	LOCAL FUNDS (Regional Toll Revenue)
Construct approximately 2.9 miles of trail, bridges, signals, and intersection crossings in Addison, Coppell, and Dallas	\$22,583,558	\$5,059,461	\$1,224,097	\$12.0 M	\$4.3 M

Schedule

Date	Milestone
March 19	NOFO Released
May 24	Surface Transportation Technical Committee Action
June 10	NCTCOG staff finalize grant application materials for DART
June 13	Regional Transportation Council Action
June 17	Grant Application deadline (submittal by DART)

Requested Action

Regional Transportation Council Approval to:

- Support the partnership with DART to submit the FHWA 2024 Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program grant application for the Cotton Belt Trail Phase 3a construction requesting \$12 million in federal funding, and the contribution of \$4.3 million Regional Toll Revenue funds for non-federal match should the project be selected for funding award.
- Direct staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Statewide TIP and other planning/administrative documents to incorporate these changes, if awarded funding.

Contact Us



Karla Windsor, AICP

Senior Program Manager

kwindsor@nctcog.org

(817) 608-2376



Kevin Kokes, AICP

Program Manager

kkokes@nctcog.org

(817) 695-9275



Catherine Richardson

Transportation Planner

crichardson@nctcog.org

(682) 433-0485





AIR QUALITY AND SAFETY DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

June 13, 2024

Regional Transportation Council

Chris Klaus, Senior Program Manager

North Central Texas Council of Governments

Air Quality and Safety Demonstration Projects

Car Care Safety Integration

Vision Zero goal of eliminating vehicle related fatalities by 2050

Statewide safety program elimination January 1, 2025

Reduce vehicle crashes caused by inoperable vehicle safety components

Vehicle Emissions Inspection and License Plate Project (formerly known as License Plate Readers)

Vehicle paper/temporary registration tags phased out beginning July 1, 2025

Beginning to see fictitious metal license plates

Prevent avoidance of annual emissions test and lost revenue

Truck Assessment and Goods Movement Program

Emissions component tampering

Potentially massive air quality impacts

Air chemistry modeling and regional air quality monitors disconnect



Air Quality and Safety Demonstration Projects

Project	Description	Budget	Source
Car Care Safety Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public education regarding importance of vehicle safety component operation and maintenance. Partnering with vendors to coordinate replacement of certain vehicle safety components. 	\$200,000	RTC Local Funds
Vehicle Emissions Inspection and License Plate Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of potential metal license plate fraud in the region. Purchase of license plate reading cameras to gather data, determine rate of fake plates, and next steps. 	\$200,000	Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) Funds
Truck Assessment and Goods Movement Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emissions tampering evaluation of heavy-duty diesel trucks operating in the region. Assessment of severity and impacts to determine options to limit these illegal practices. 	\$600,000	RTR Funds



Schedule

Milestone	Date
STTC Information	April 26, 2024
RTC Information	May 9, 2024
STTC Recommendation for RTC Approval	May 24, 2024
RTC Approval	June 13, 2024
Executive Board Approval through FY2024-2025 UPWP Amendment #3	July 25, 2024
Implementation	Early FY2025



Air Quality and Safety Demonstration Projects

Requested Action:

Approval* of Funding and Implementing Demonstration Projects

Car Care Safety Integration - \$200,000 RTC Local

License Plate Readers - \$200,000 RTR

Truck Assessment and Goods Movement Program - \$600,000 RTR

Administratively amend Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) and Statewide TIP, as well as other planning and administrative documents to include the amended funding

*Vote for Approval in Item #6 or Item #7



Contact Us



Anthony Moffa
Air Quality Planner
amoffa@nctcog.org



Jason Brown
Principal Air Quality Planner
jbrown@nctcog.org



Chris Klaus
Senior Program Manager
cklaus@nctcog.org



2025-2028 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) DOCUMENT

Regional Transportation Council
June 13, 2024

WHAT IS THE TIP?

- The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is an inventory of funded transportation projects within the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) boundary
- It is mandated by the federal and state governments and contains regionally significant projects funded with federal, state, and local sources
- A new TIP is developed every two years and updated on a quarterly basis

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

- Review existing projects and gather information on additional locally funded projects
- Make needed revisions to existing project schedules, funding, and/or scope
- Develop revised project listings
- Financially constrain project programming based on estimated future revenues
- Conduct Mobility Plan and Air Quality conformity review
- Solicit public and Committee/Council input
- **Finalize project listings and submit to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)**

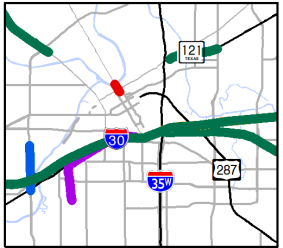
SCOPE OF PROGRAMMING

- \$9.06 Billion in the 2025-2028 TIP (Roadway and Transit)
 - \$3.63 Billion in Federal Commitments
 - \$2.00 Billion in State Commitments
 - \$0.25 Billion in Regional Commitments
 - \$1.22 Billion in Local Commitments
 - \$1.96 Billion in Transit Formula Commitments
- 1,282 Active Projects (Roadway and Transit)
 - 844 Active Projects in 2025-2045
- 78 Implementing Agencies (Roadway and Transit)

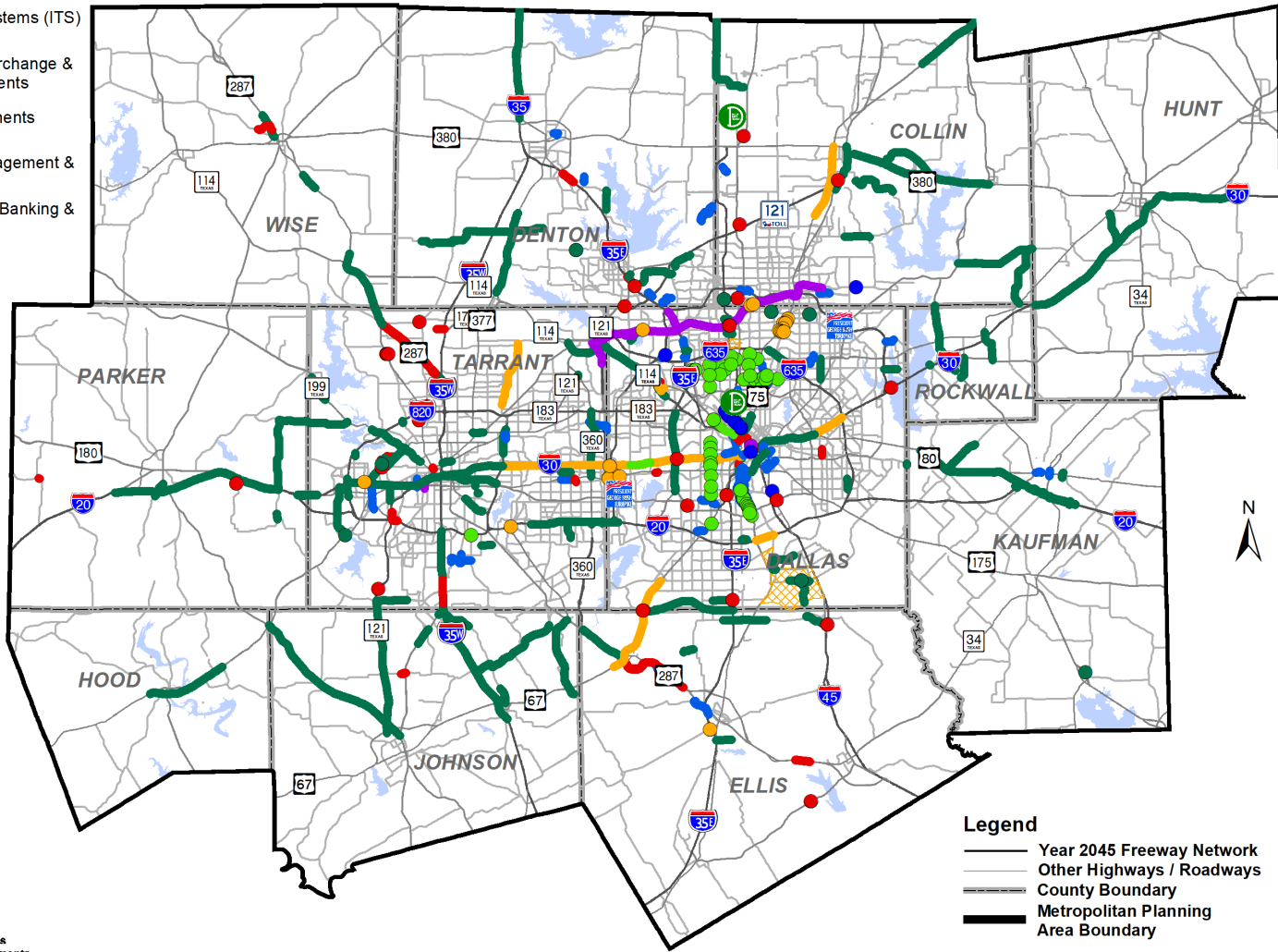
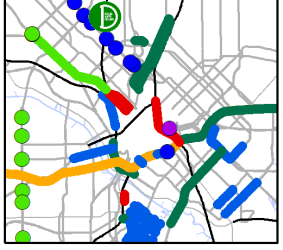
2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Projects By Project Type

- Project Type**
- █ Roadway Improvements
 - █ Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) & Signal Improvements
 - █ Bottleneck, Intersection, Interchange & Grade Separation Improvements
 - █ Bicycle-Pedestrian Improvements
 - █ Management & Operations, Safety, Travel Demand Management & Special Studies
 - █ Transit Improvements, Land Banking & Park and Ride Stations

Fort Worth CBD



Dallas CBD



- Legend**
- Year 2045 Freeway Network
 - Other Highways / Roadways
 - County Boundary
 - Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary



*Some projects are regional in scope and are not displayed as a discrete location on the map.

2025-2028 Funding Status of Transportation Improvement Projects

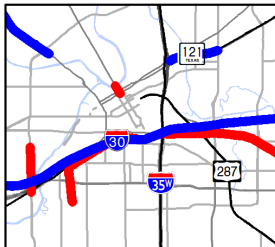
Phase Type

- Construction Phase
- Engineering and/or ROW Phase Only

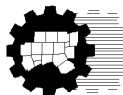
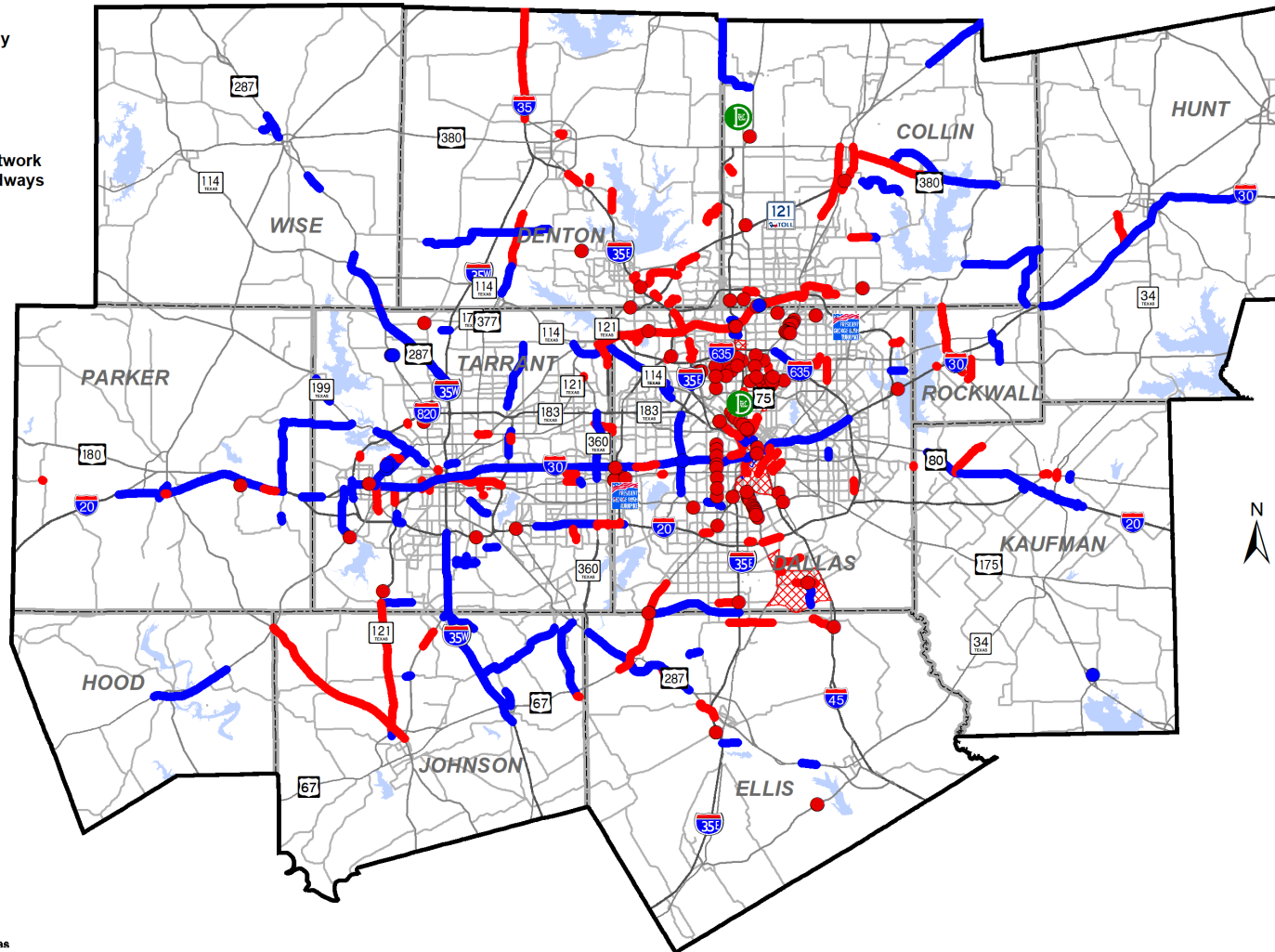
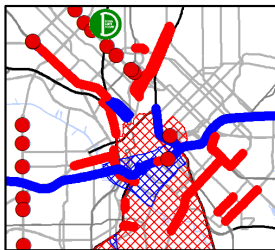
Legend

- Year 2045 Freeway Network
- Other Highways / Roadways
- County Boundary
- Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary

Fort Worth CBD



Dallas CBD



North Central Texas
Council of Governments
Transportation

*Some projects are regional in scope and are not displayed as a discrete location on the map.

PROPOSED PROJECT REVISIONS

- During the public involvement period, several projects have been updated to ensure that they are reflected correctly in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
- Most of the proposed revisions are administrative in nature, including:
 - Revising TxDOT CSJ numbers
 - Revising comments
 - Ensuring Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) references are correct
 - “Grouping” projects such as intersection improvements, bicycle/pedestrian improvements, and safety projects that are not required to be listed individually in the TIP/STIP
- A few changes are more substantive in nature, including:
 - Scope changes to ensure consistency with the MTP
 - Adding projects to the STIP report that were in the double entry listing (Appendix C), but were inadvertently omitted from draft STIP report due to database issues

REQUESTED ACTION

- RTC approval of:
 - The 2025-2028 TIP document, including the final TIP listings to be included in the STIP
 - The resolution adopting the 2025-2028 TIP, which will be transmitted to federal, state, and local impacted agencies
 - Amending the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and other planning/administrative documents as needed

TIMELINE/ACTION

Meeting/Task	Date
Coordination with Implementing Agencies	August-October 2023
Development of TIP Listings and Document	August 2023-April 2024
Draft Listings - STTC Information	April 2024
Draft Listings - RTC Information	May 2024
Public Meeting - Draft Listings and Document	May 2024
Final Listings and Document - STTC Action	May 2024
Deadline for Providing Public Comments	June 11, 2024
Final Listings and Document - RTC Action	June 2024
Submit Final Document to TxDOT	July 2024
Anticipate TxDOT Commission Approval (for STIP)	August/September 2024
Anticipate Federal/State Approval (STIP)	October/November 2024

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Christie J. Gotti
Senior Program Manager
Ph: (817) 608-2338
cgotti@nctcog.org

Brian Dell
Principal Transportation Planner
Ph: (817) 704-5694
bdell@nctcog.org

Cody Derrick
Senior Transportation Planner
Ph: (817) 608-2391
cderrick@nctcog.org

Dylan Niles
Transportation Planner I
Ph: (682) 433-0512
dniles@nctcog.org

DRAFT

**RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE
2025-2028 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
FOR NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS
(R24-02)**

WHEREAS, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area by the Governor of Texas in accordance with federal law; and,

WHEREAS, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), comprised primarily of local elected officials, is the regional transportation policy body associated with the North Central Texas Council of Governments, and has been and continues to be the regional forum for cooperative decisions on transportation; and,

WHEREAS, under 23 United States Code (USC) 134, the MPO is responsible for carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process, in cooperation with the State and operators of publicly owned transit services; and,

WHEREAS, under 23 USC 134, the MPO is responsible for developing and maintaining the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and their periodic updates; and,

WHEREAS, under 23 USC 134, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program are required to include a financial plan to demonstrate how the MTP and TIP can be implemented; and,

WHEREAS, the Dallas-Fort Worth area is a federally designated nonattainment area for the pollutant ozone, and air quality conformity of the MTP and TIP shall be determined by the MPO as required by the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Transportation Conformity Regulations found in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 90; and,

WHEREAS, the EPA has designated the 10-county area of Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant, and Wise counties as severe nonattainment under the 2008 8-hour ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) effective November 7, 2022; and designated the nine-county area of Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Tarrant, and Wise counties as moderate nonattainment under the 2015 8-hour ozone NAAQS effective November 7, 2022; and,

WHEREAS, the EPA announced on January 26, 2024, its proposal to grant a request submitted by Texas Governor Greg Abbott to reclassify the nine-county DFW ozone nonattainment area from moderate to serious for the 2015 ozone NAAQS; and,

WHEREAS, all regionally significant ground transportation improvements, regardless of funding source, within the Dallas-Fort Worth ozone nonattainment area must be inventoried and included in the MTP and TIP, and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for the conformity analysis requirements of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990; and,

WHEREAS, the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program for North Central Texas was developed in cooperation with local governments, the Texas Department of Transportation, Dallas Area Rapid Transit, Fort Worth Transportation Authority (Trinity Metro), Denton County Transportation Authority, North Texas Tollway Authority, and other transportation agencies; and,

WHEREAS, all projects in the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program for North Central Texas were developed in conjunction with Mobility 2045: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan for North Central Texas – 2022 Update in a manner consistent with the federal regulations found in 23 CFR 450, 49 CFR 613, and 40 CFR 90; and,

WHEREAS, the planning process used in development of the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program for North Central Texas was conducted in accordance with NCTCOG's approved public involvement procedures required under 23 USC 134, and Transportation Conformity Regulations, including presentation at public meetings and the allowance of a 30-day comment period prior to Regional Transportation Council approval of the TIP; and,

WHEREAS, the air quality conformity review has indicated that the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program for North Central Texas meets the transportation conformity-related requirements of the State Implementation Plan, the Clean Air Act as amended on November 15, 1990, and the Transportation Conformity Regulations; and,

WHEREAS, NCTCOG's Surface Transportation Technical Committee has recommended Regional Transportation Council approval of the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program for North Central Texas project listings.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED THAT:

- Section 1.** The Regional Transportation Council affirms that the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program for North Central Texas has been developed and found to be in compliance with 23 USC 134, the Clean Air Act, and corresponding regulations.
- Section 2.** The Regional Transportation Council affirms that the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program for North Central Texas is consistent with the recommendations of Mobility 2045: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan for North Central Texas – 2022 Update and the air quality conformity results.
- Section 3.** The Regional Transportation Council adopts the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program for North Central Texas.
- Section 4.** The 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program for North Central Texas will be submitted for inclusion in the 2025-2028 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.
- Section 5.** The Regional Transportation Council hereby directs staff to amend the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and any other planning/administrative documents, to the extent necessary to incorporate changes associated with the adoption of the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program for North Central Texas.

Section 6. This resolution will be transmitted to the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Texas Department of Transportation, Dallas Area Rapid Transit, Fort Worth Transportation Authority (Trinity Metro), Denton County Transportation Authority, North Texas Tollway Authority, Collin County Toll Road Authority, and all impacted local governments.

Section 7. This resolution shall be in effect immediately upon its adoption.

Gyna Bivens, Chair
Regional Transportation Council
Mayor Pro Tem, City of Fort Worth

I hereby certify that this resolution was adopted by the Regional Transportation Council of the North Central Texas Council of Governments for the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area on June 13, 2024.

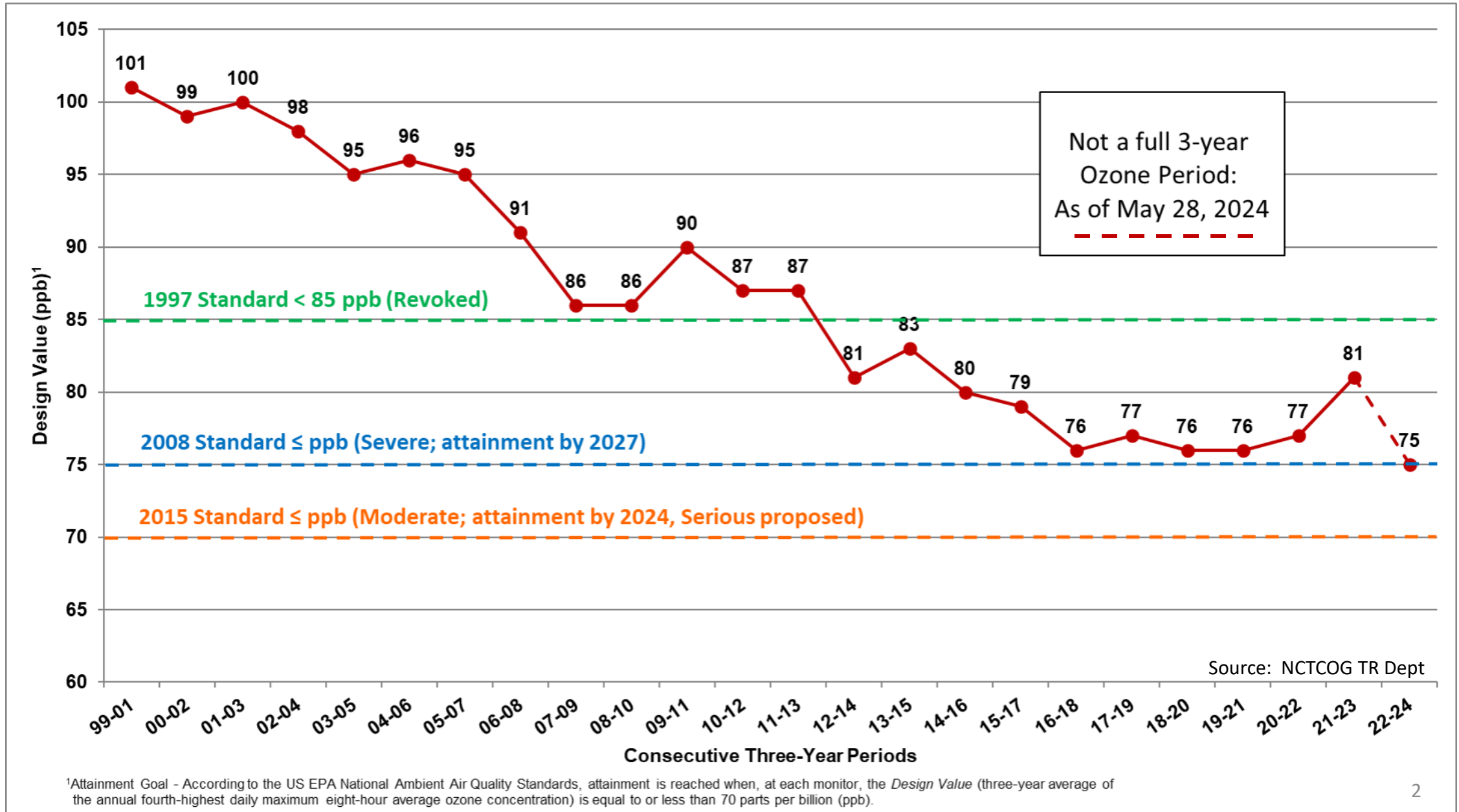
Clay Lewis Jenkins, Vice Chair
Regional Transportation Council
County Judge, Dallas County

Air Quality Status Report

Regional Transportation Council • June 13, 2024

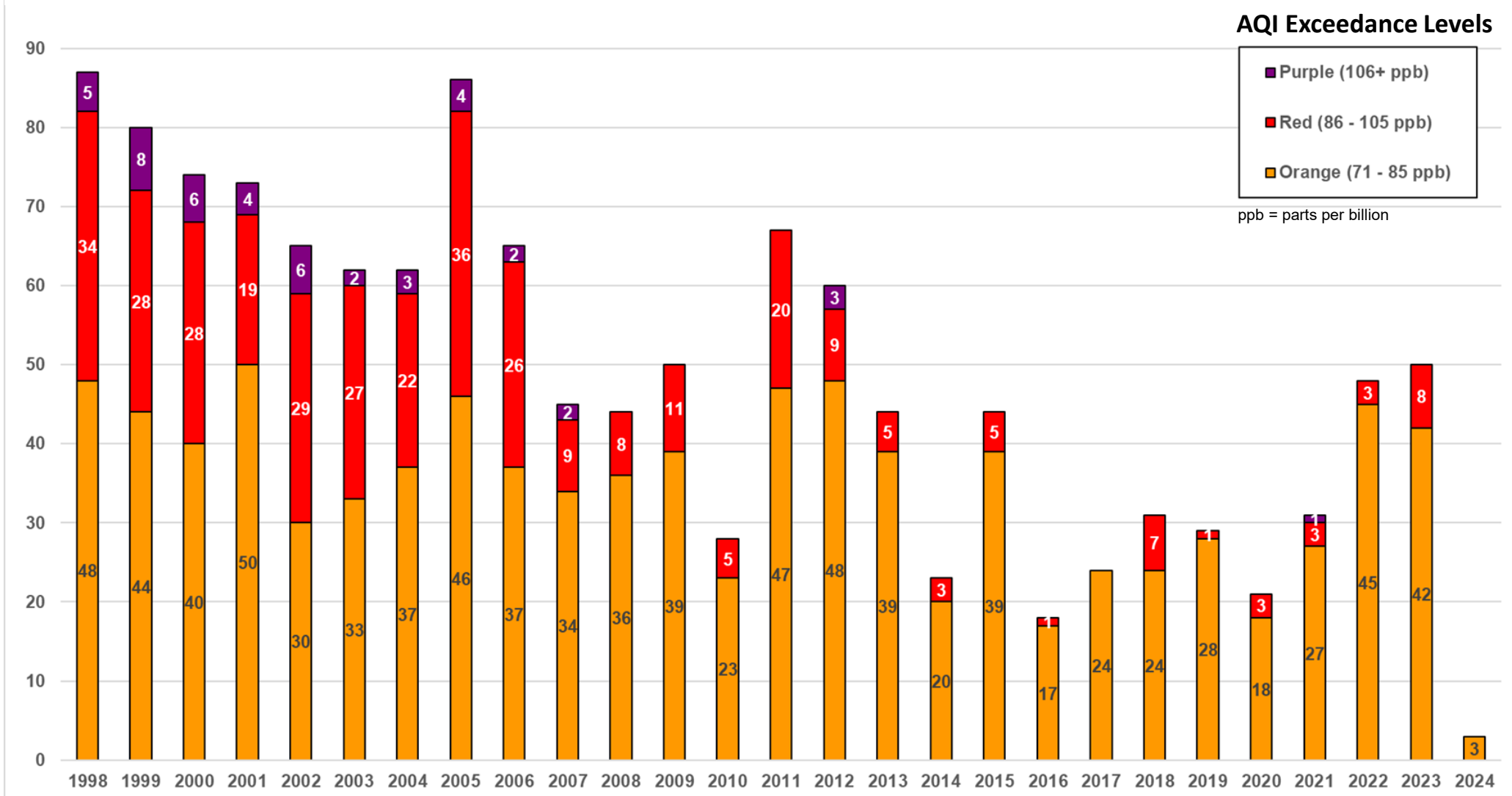
Jenny Narvaez

8-Hour Ozone Design Value Trends



Regulatory 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards Exceedance Trends

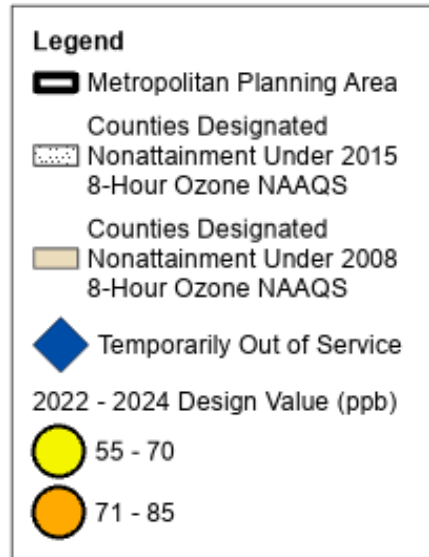
Based on ≤ 70 ppb – Ozone Season 2024 (as of May 29, 2024)



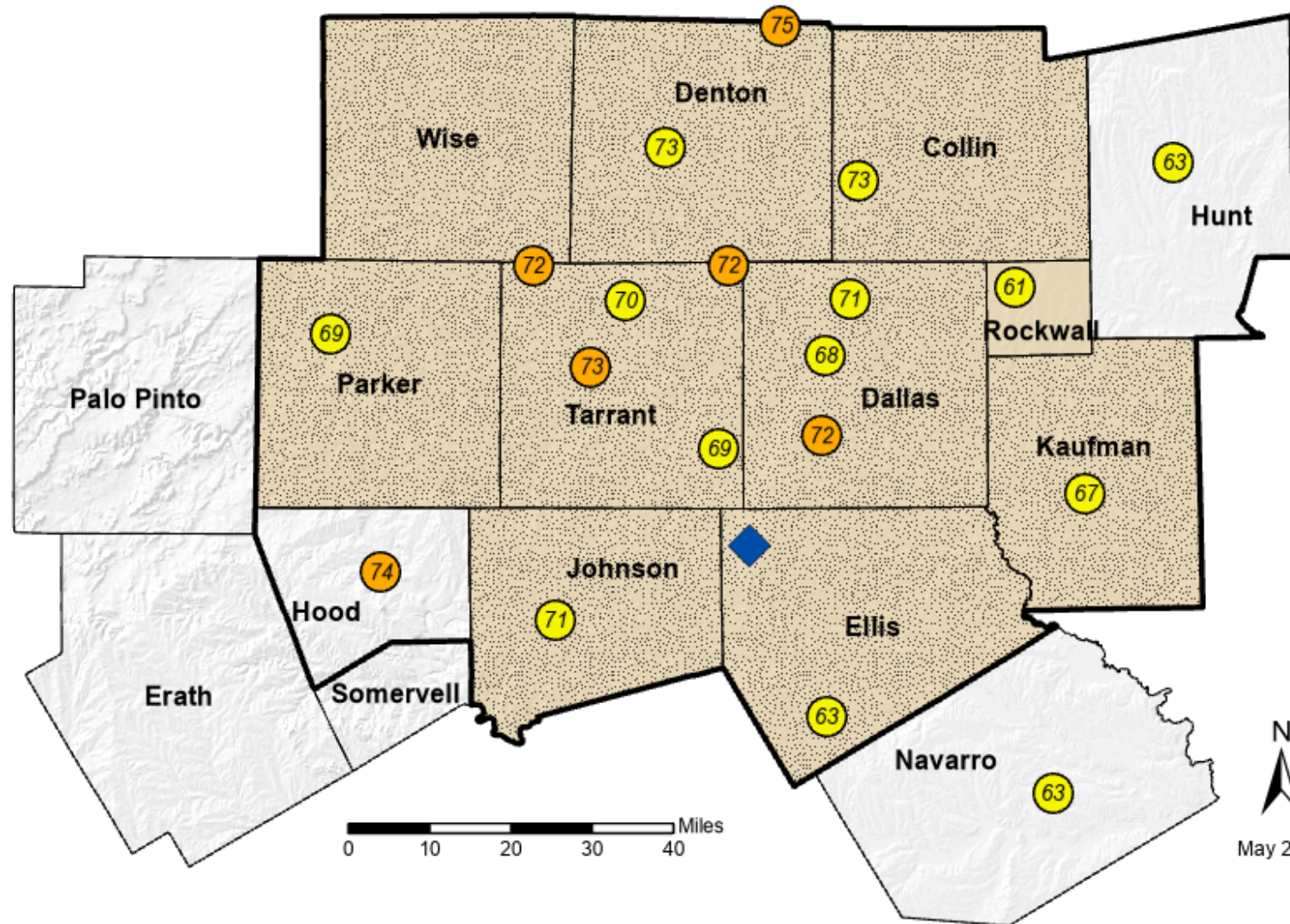
Exceedance Level indicates daily maximum eight-hour average ozone concentration. Exceedance Levels are based on Air Quality Index (AQI) thresholds established by the EPA for the revised ozone standard of 70 ppb.

Regulatory Ozone Monitor Locations with Design Value

As of May 29, 2024



Colors represent Ozone Warning Level Breakpoints



2008 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards Attainment Scenario (≤ 75 ppb)

Five Highest Monitors	4 th Highest Value for Season			2024 Ozone Season Design Value Current/Max
	2022	2023	2024 Current/Max	
Denton Airport South	78	78	63/72	73/76
Frisco	73	82	64/73	73/76
Ft. Worth Northwest	80	84	57/64	73/76
Granbury	81	79	62/68	74/76
Pilot Point	77	81	69/70	75/76

As of May 29, 2024



Sample of Mobile Source Air Quality Initiatives



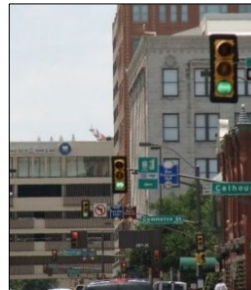
Rideshare. Record. Reward.



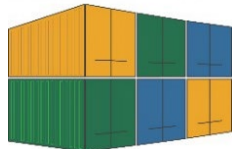
U.S. Department of Energy



Dallas-Fort Worth
CLEAN CITIES



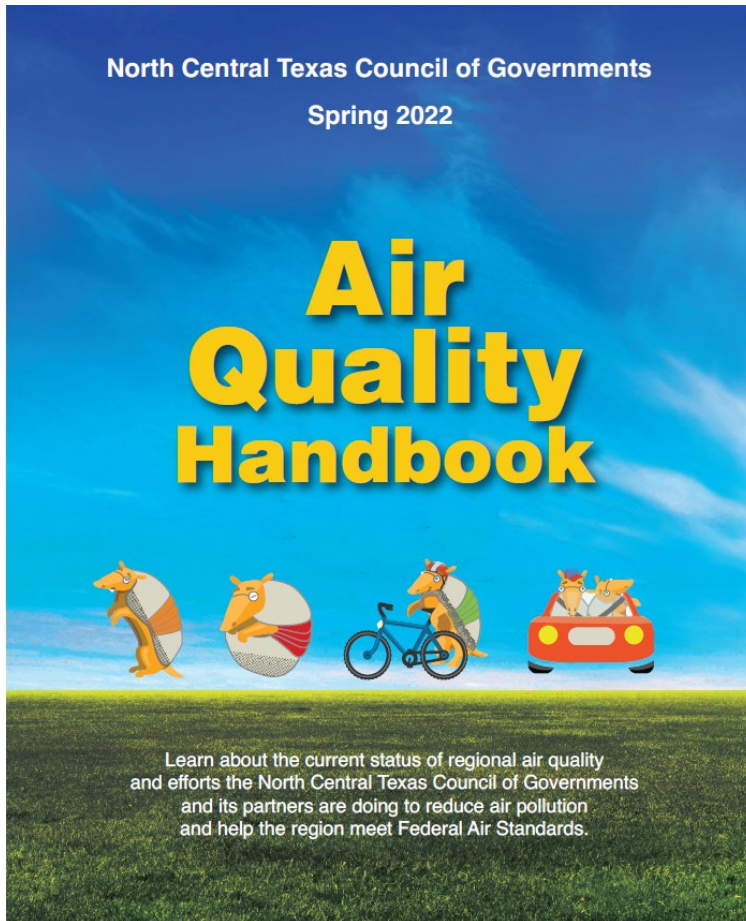
FREIGHT NORTH TEXAS



Air Quality Handbook

Multilingual

English



https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/3e4466f8-aad7-4979-b336-d0b79c6fd10e/aq2022printer_spring.508e33.pdf?lang=en-US

Spanish



<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/8d3a380e-dc11-4286-8efa-e430b74e337c/aq2022spanish.b128ac.pdf?lang=en-US>

Vietnamese



<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/787b9fe9-94d9-4d76-9701-020876a06e61/AQHbkViet.pdf>

EPA Revision of the PM_{2.5} Primary Annual Standard

PM_{2.5} Primary Annual Standard

- Former Standard: 12.0 µg/m³ – annual mean, averaged over 3 years
- **New Standard as of February 7, 2024 : 9.0 µg/m³**

PM_{2.5} 24-hour Standard

- Current: 35 µg/m³ – 98th percentile, averaged over 3 years
- **Standard retained: 35 µg/m³**

PM₁₀ 24-hour Standard

- Current: 150 µg/m³ – 98th percentile, averaged over 3 years
- **Standard retained: 150 µg/m³**



Impacts of Revised PM_{2.5} Primary Annual Standard

Potential for Dallas and Tarrant Counties to be in Nonattainment

County – Monitoring Station	2020 – 2022 Data	2021 – 2023 Preliminary Data
Dallas – Convention Center	9.4 µg/m ³	9.9 µg/m ³
Tarrant – California Parkway	9.1 µg/m ³	8.7 µg/m ³
Tarrant – Haws Athletic Center	8.9 µg/m ³	9.6 µg/m ³






112 counties nationwide do not meet 9.0 µg/m³

EPA projections show 51 would not meet 9.0 µg/m³ in 2032

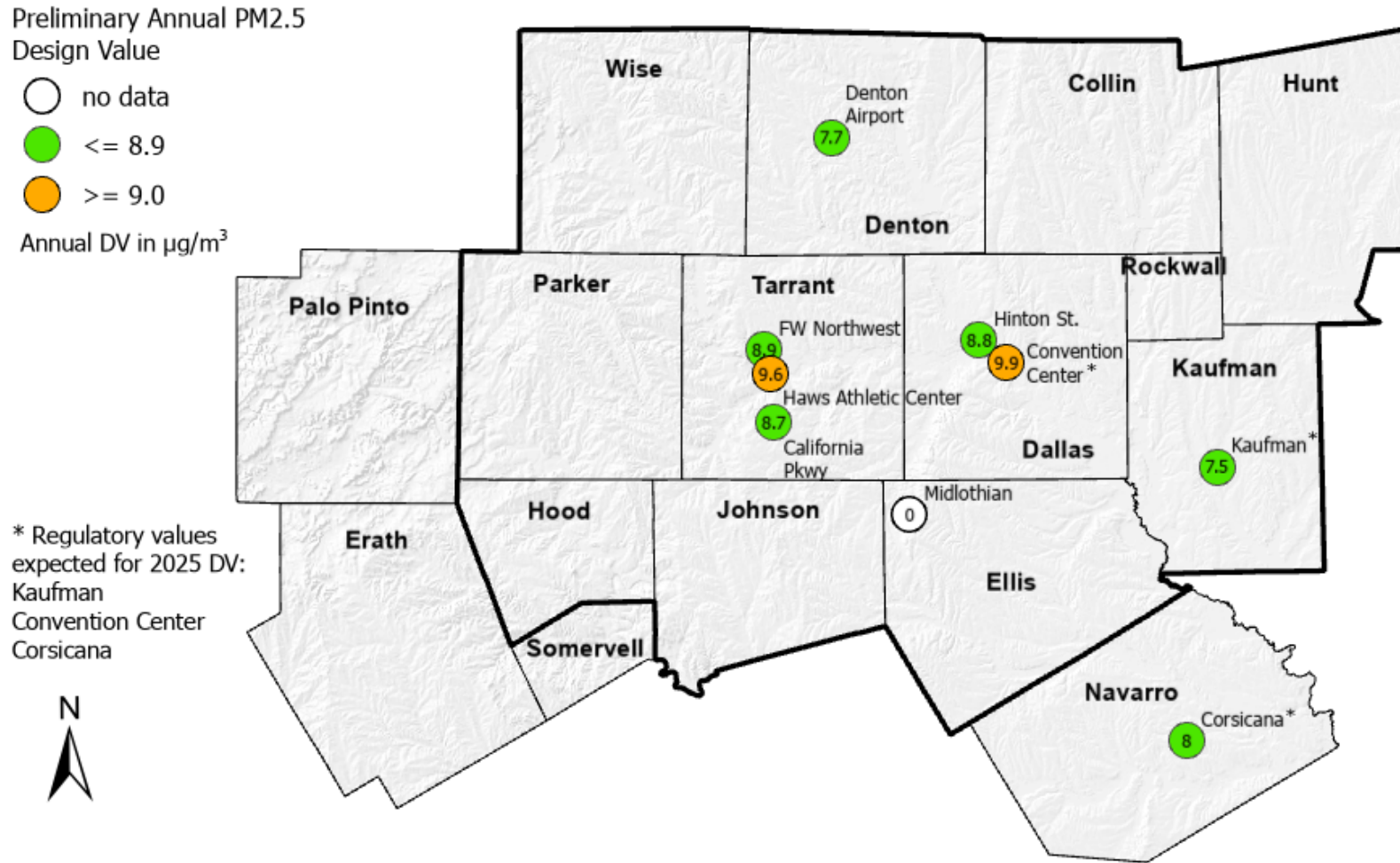


PM_{2.5} Annual Design Value - Draft

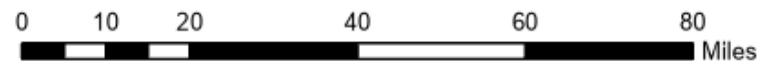
On February 7, 2024, EPA changed the PM_{2.5} NAAQ Standard from 12.0 µg/m³ to 9.0 µg/m³.

-  Metropolitan Planning Area
-  County boundaries
- Preliminary Annual PM_{2.5} Design Value
-  no data
-  ≤ 8.9
-  ≥ 9.0
- Annual DV in µg/m³

Preliminary 2023 PM_{2.5} Annual Design Values
2021 - 2023



* Regulatory values expected for 2025 DV:
Kaufman
Convention Center
Corsicana



Schedule of Revised PM_{2.5} Primary Annual Standard

TCEQ's 2023 data certification letter due to EPA by May 1, 2024

TCEQ public outreach meetings in June or July 2024

TCEQ solicits informal comments from the public in July or August 2024

**Designation package to the Commission for consideration at the end of 2024
(based on 2021-2023 data)**

Designation package to the Governor's Office for consideration

State's designations to EPA due by February 7, 2025

**EPA sends 120-day letter by October 2025 indicating its intended designations if
different from TCEQ (data may be based on 2022-2024)**

State opportunity to respond prior to EPA finalizing its designations in 2026



FOR MORE INFORMATION

CHRIS KLAUS
Senior Program Manager
cklaus@nctcog.org
817-695-9286

JENNY NARVAEZ
Program Manager
jnarvaez@nctcog.org
817-608-2342

VIVEK THIMMAVAJJHALA
Transportation System Modeler
vthimmavajjhala@nctcog.org
817-704-2504

DANIELA TOWER
Air Quality Planner
dtower@nctcog.org
817-704-5629

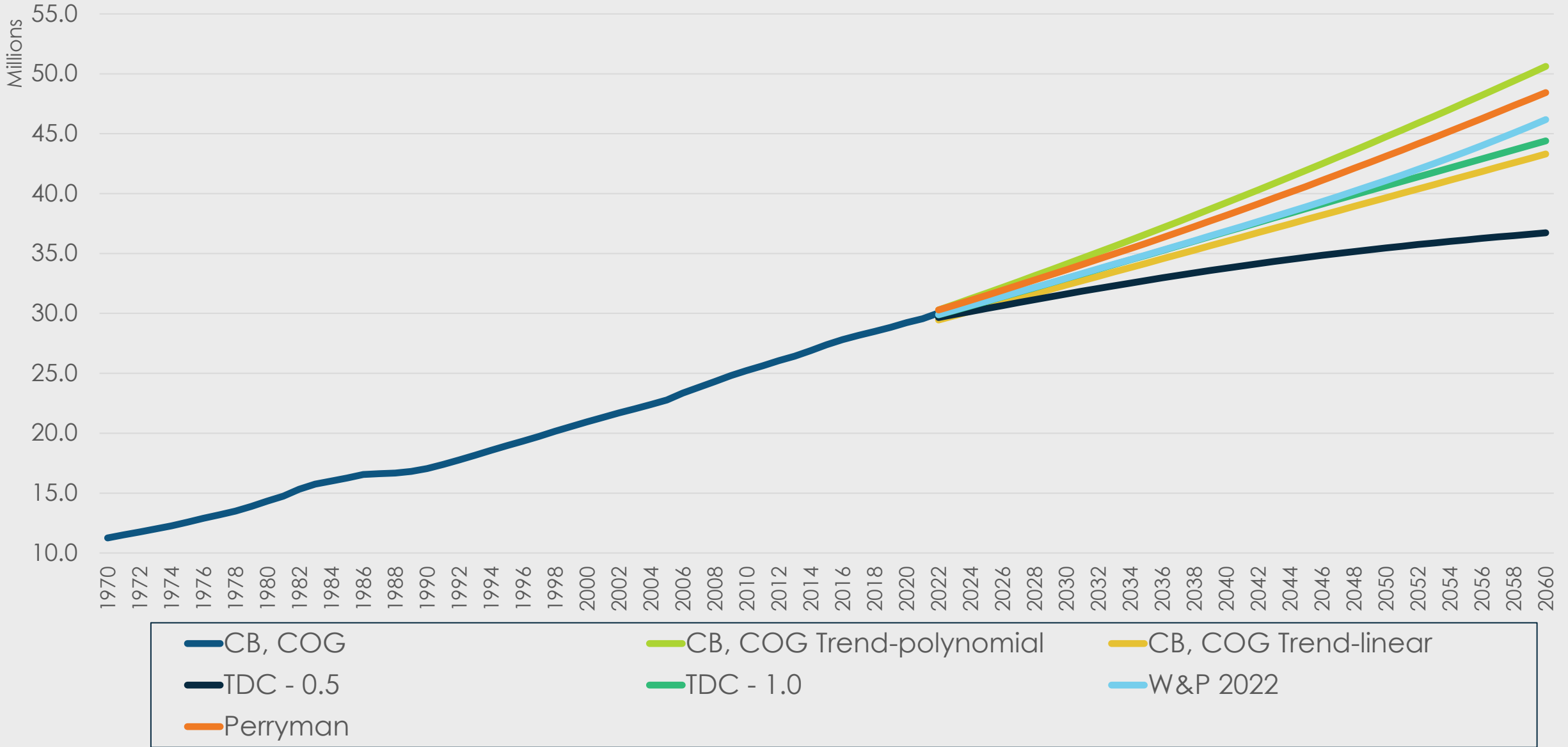
<https://www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/air>

Development of 2050 Regional Population and Employment Control Totals for the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA)

**PRESENTED TO THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL
JUNE 13, 2024**

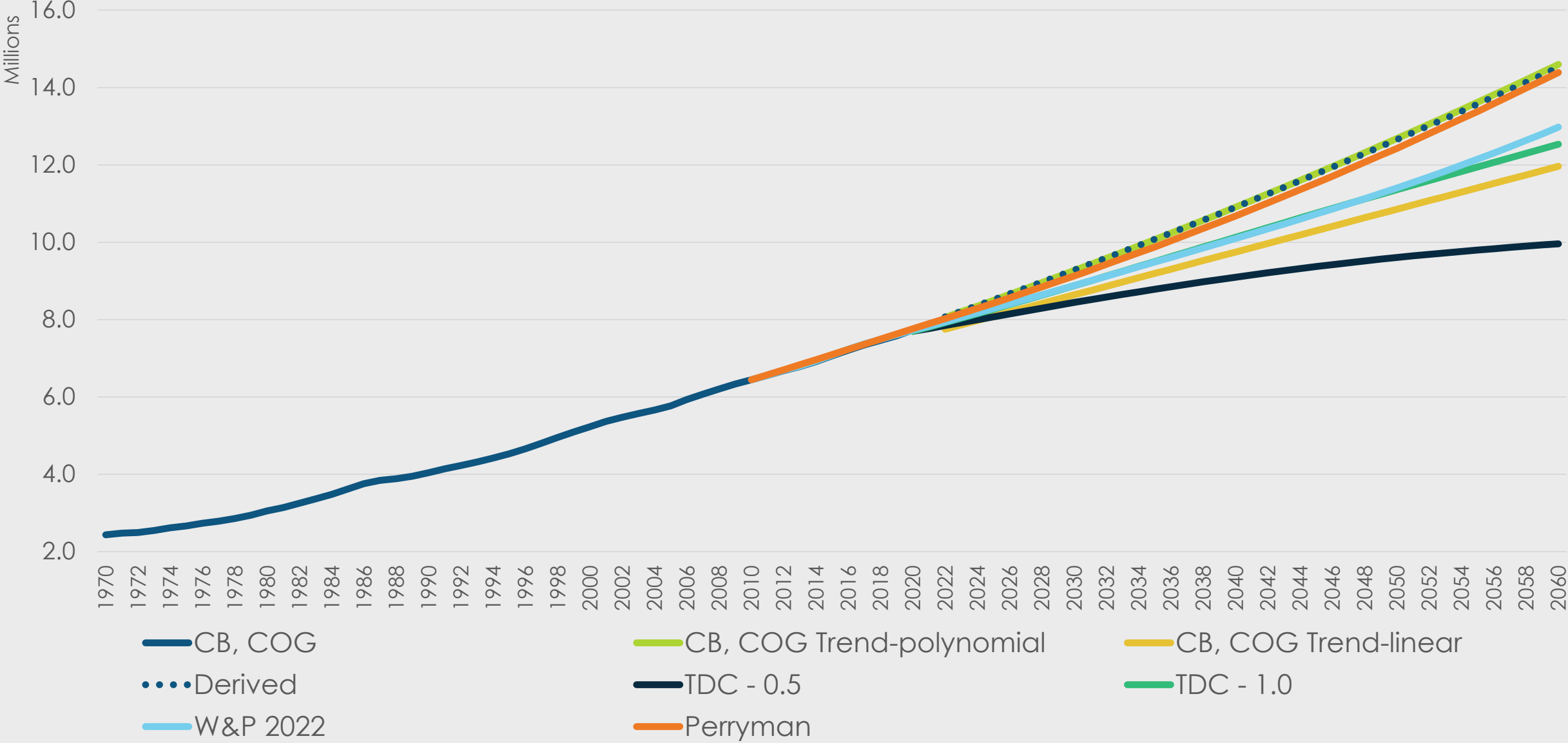
Population

Population Forecasts - Texas



Source: US Census Bureau, Texas Demographic Center, Woods & Poole Economics, The Perryman Group, NCTCOG

Population Forecasts - MPA



Source: US Census Bureau, Texas Demographic Center, Woods & Poole Economics, The Perryman Group, NCTCOG

Population Compound Annual Growth Rate - MPA

Source	1970 - 2022	2022-2045	2022-2050	2022 - 2060
COG, CB*	2.32%			
Derived		1.65%	1.62%	1.56%
CB, COG Trend - polynomial		1.67%	1.63%	1.58%
CB, COG Trend - linear		1.24%	1.21%	1.15%
TDC - 0.5		0.78%	0.73%	0.63%
TDC - 1.0		1.34%	1.30%	1.21%
W&P 2022		1.32%	1.30%	1.30%
Perryman		1.59%	1.57%	1.55%

*If growth continues at this rate, total population would be 15.2 million in 2050 and 19.1 million in 2060

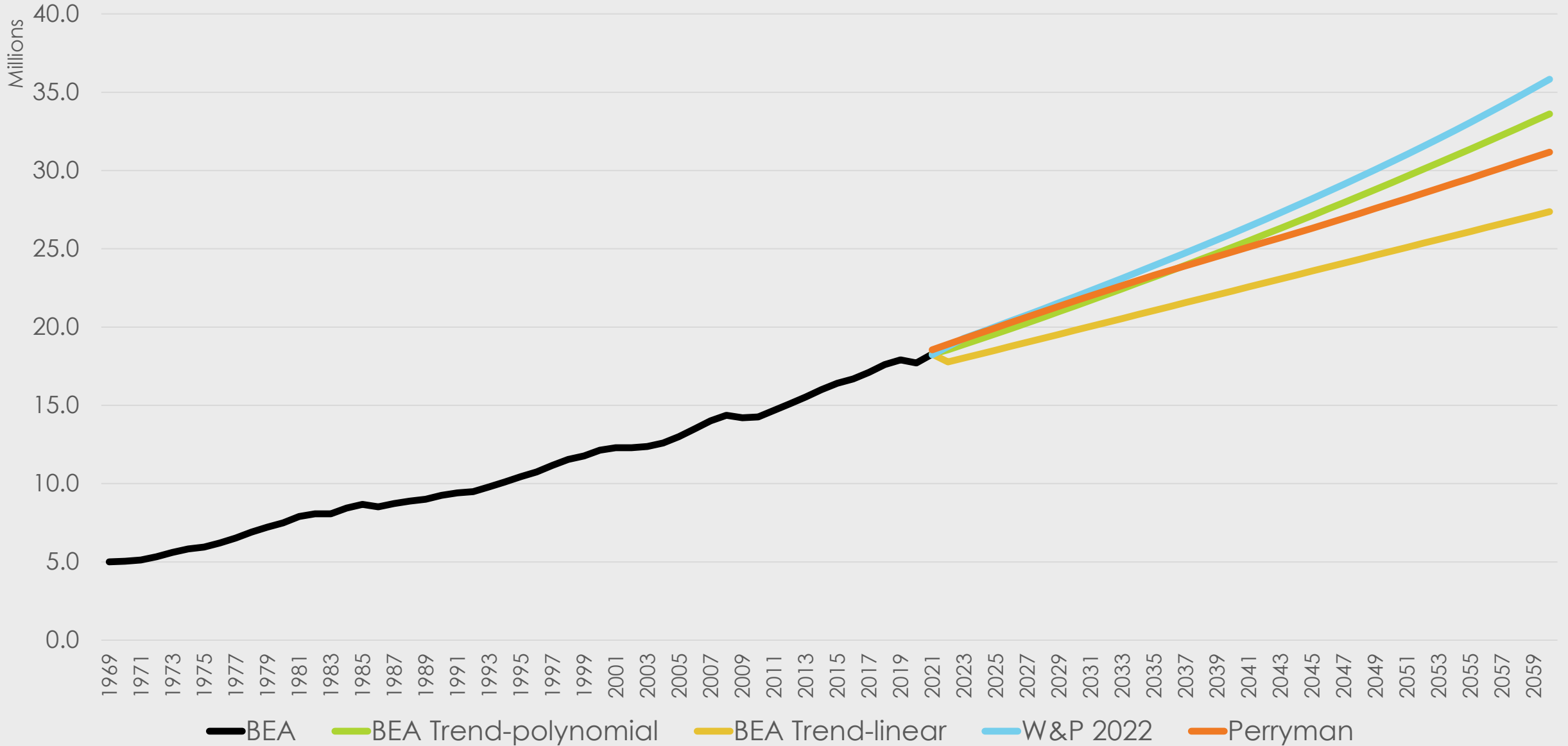
Population - MPA

Source	2022	2045	2050	2060
COG, CB	8,010,058			
Derived		11,766,002	12,654,777	14,522,714
CB, COG Trend - polynomial		11,778,002	12,682,840	14,594,747
CB, COG Trend - linear		10,301,109	10,854,954	11,962,646
TDC - 0.5		9,371,905	9,605,686	9,960,552
TDC - 1.0		10,751,826	11,359,906	12,531,338
W&P 2022		10,729,098	11,405,108	12,974,165
Perryman		11,529,041	12,429,673	14,390,517

Source: US Census Bureau, Texas Demographic Center, Woods & Poole Economics, The Perryman Group, NCTCOG

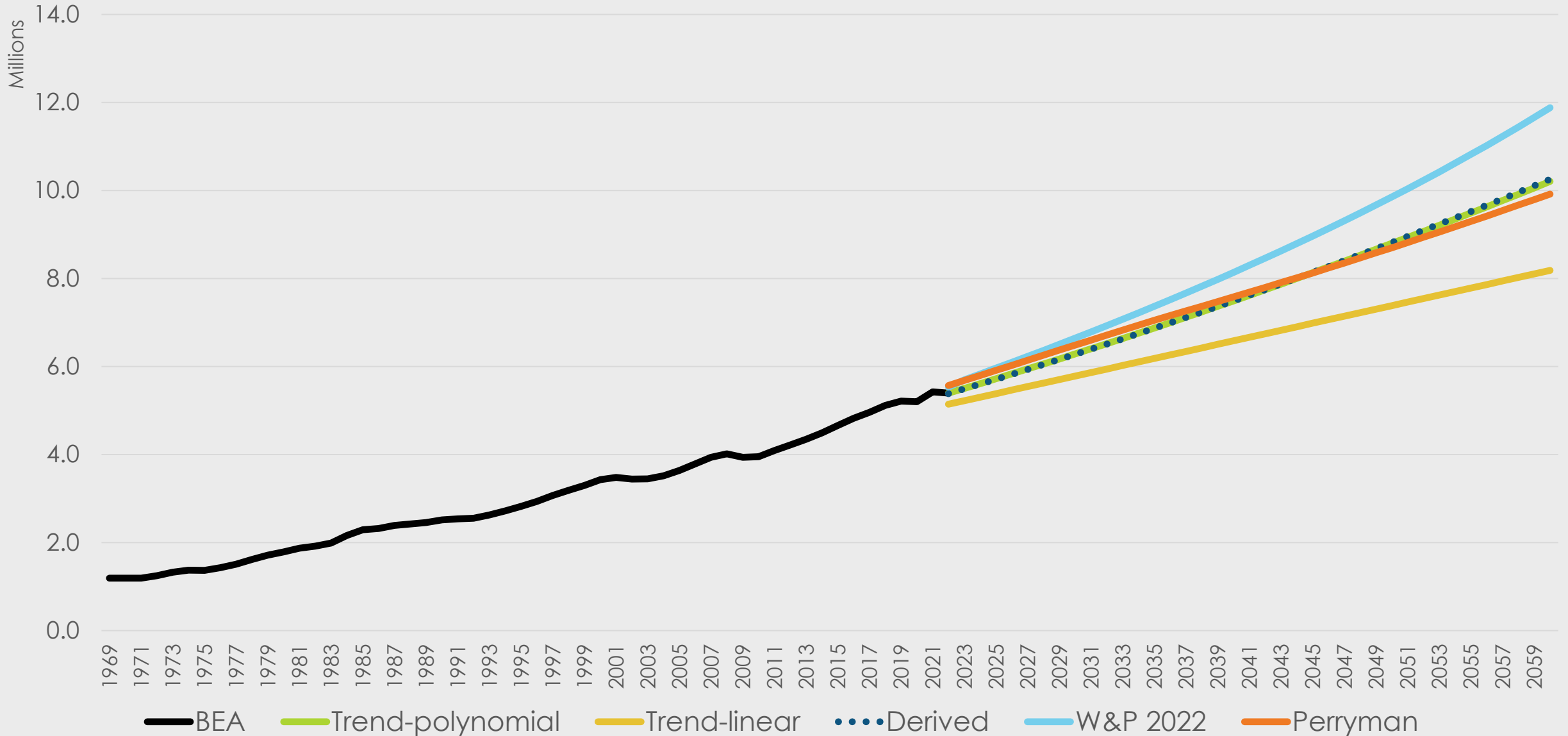
Employment

Employment Forecasts - Texas



Source: BEA CAEMP25S (1969-2000, SIC), BEA CAEMP25N (2001-2021, NAICS), NCTCOG, Woods & Poole Economics, The Perryman Group

Employment Forecasts - MPA



Source: BEA CAEMP25S (1969-2000, SIC), BEA CAEMP25N (2001-2021, NAICS), NCTCOG, Woods & Poole Economics, The Perryman Group

Employment Compound Annual Growth Rate - MPA

Source	1969 - 2021	2021-2045	2021-2050	2021 - 2060
BEA*	2.96%			
Derived		1.82%	1.79%	1.72%
BEA Trend-polynomial		1.70%	1.68%	1.63%
BEA Trend-linear		1.06%	1.06%	1.06%
W&P 2022		2.16%	2.12%	2.06%
Perryman		1.67%	1.62%	1.54%

*If growth continues at this rate, total employment would be 12.6 million in 2050 and 16.9 million in 2060

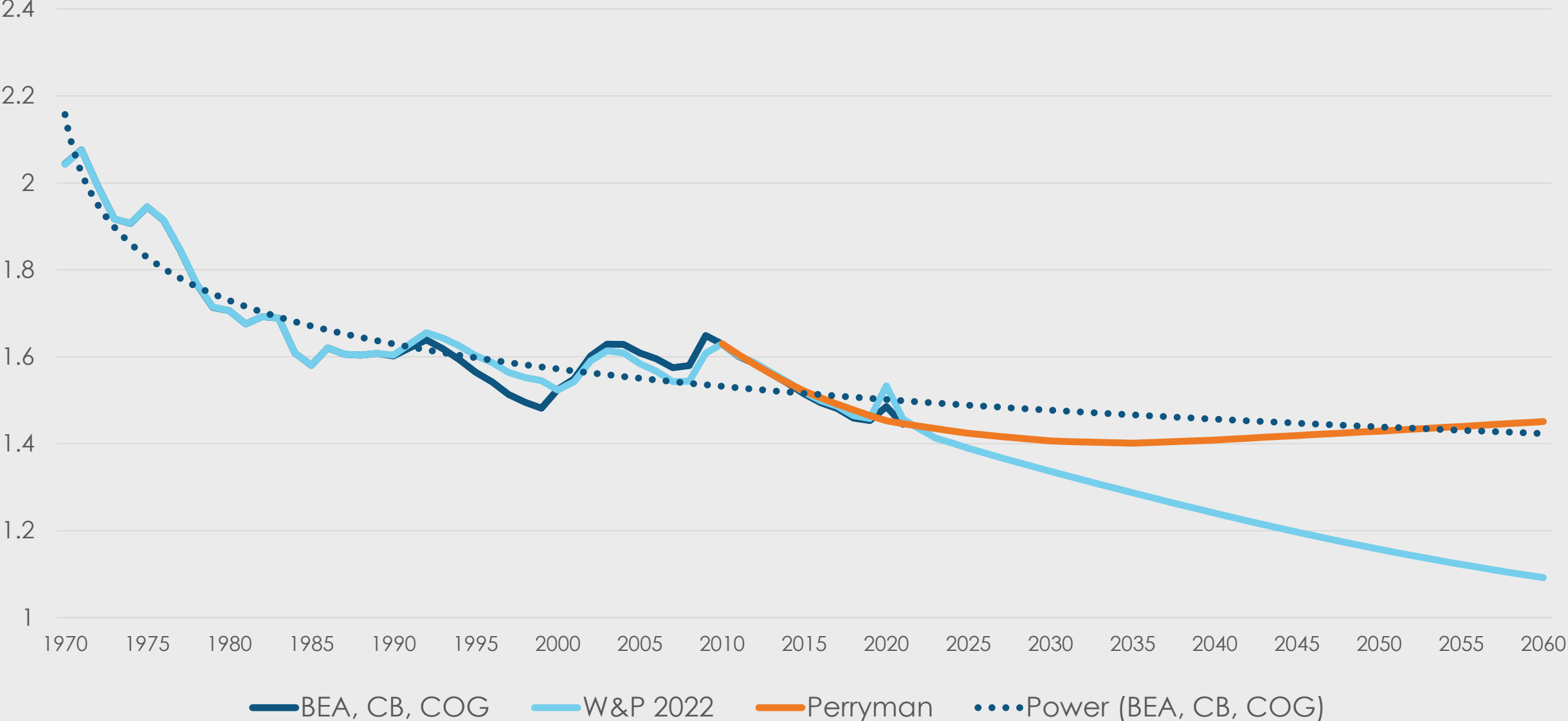
Total Employment - MPA

Source	2021	2045	2050	2060
BEA	5,423,995			
Derived		8,140,576	8,817,630	10,256,381
BEA Trend-polynomial		8,132,282	8,798,119	10,205,761
BEA Trend-linear		6,984,672	7,384,625	8,184,529
W&P 2022	5,368,786	8,963,802	9,853,002	11,879,958
Perryman		8,124,277	8,698,026	9,917,958

Source: BEA, NCTCOG, Woods & Poole Economics, The Perryman Group

Population/ Employment Ratios (P/E)

MPA P/E Ratios from 1970 – 2060



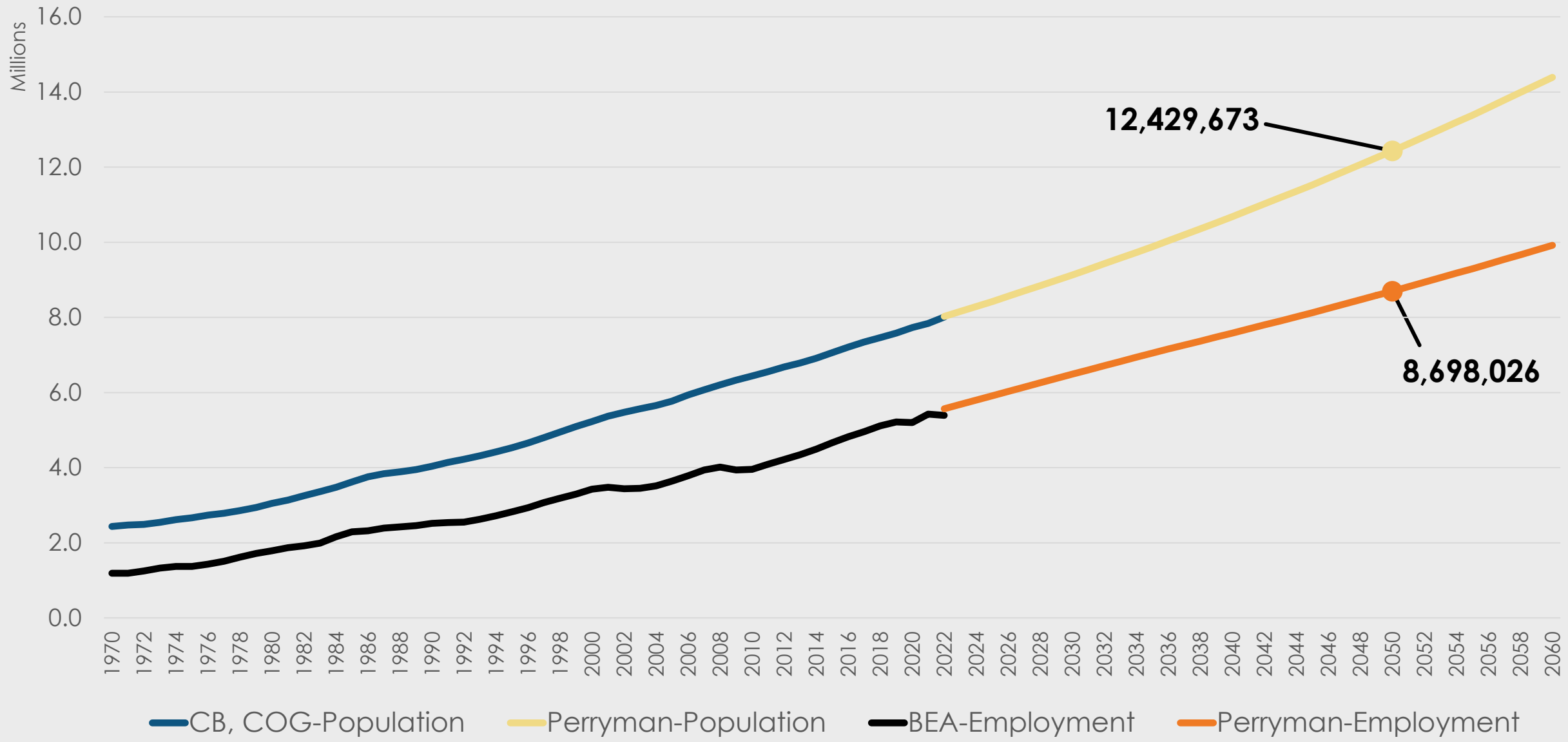
Source: US Census Bureau, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Woods & Poole Economics, The Perryman Group, NCTCOG

P/E Ratios - MPA

Source	2010	2020	2030	2040	2045	2050	2060
BEA, CB, COG	1.63	1.49					
Power, from 1970	1.53	1.50	1.48	1.46	1.45	1.44	1.42
Log, from 1980	1.54	1.53	1.52	1.51	1.51	1.50	1.49
W&P 2022	1.63	1.53	1.34	1.24	1.20	1.16	1.09
Perryman	1.63	1.45	1.41	1.41	1.42	1.43	1.45

Recommended 2050 MPA Regional Control Totals

Historical and Projected Total Population and Employment - MPA



Source: US Census Bureau, Bureau of Economic Analysis, The Perryman Group, NCTCOG

Recommended MPA 2050 Regional Control Totals

	2022	2050 Control Total	2022 – 2050 Change	2022 – 2050 % Change
Population	8,010,058	12,429,673	4,419,615	55.2%
Employment	5,878,904	8,698,026	2,819,122	48.0%

2050 Population/Employment Ratio	1.43
----------------------------------	------



Dallas-Fort Worth
CLEAN CITIES



Regional Transportation Council

Updates on the Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Coalition

Lori Clark
Program Manager and
Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Director

Regional Transportation Council
June 13, 2024

Background - Scope of National Program

National Rebranding

National Mission Statement:

Clean Cities and Communities advances the nation's environment, energy security, and economic prosperity through collaboration with communities by building partnerships with public and private stakeholders that create equitable deployment of clean transportation solutions for all.



Light-,
Medium-, and
Heavy-Duty
Vehicles



Alternative and
Renewable
Fuels and
Infrastructure

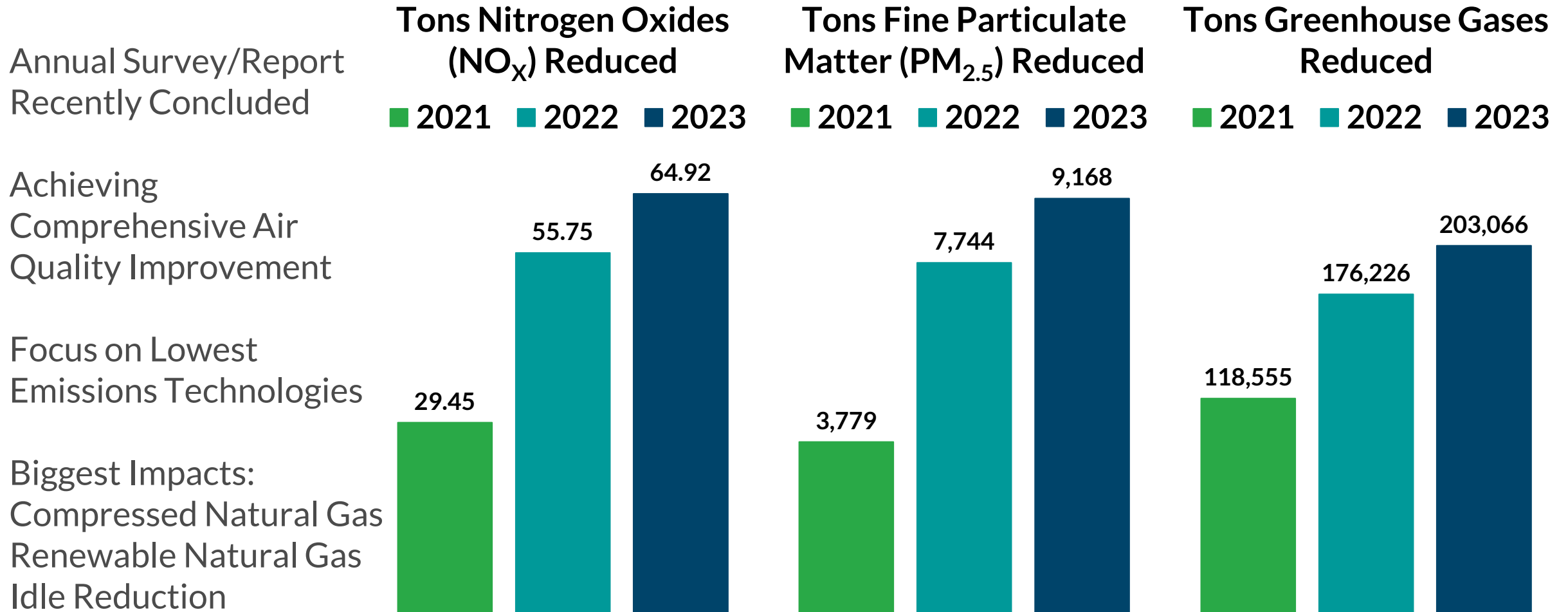


Idle Reduction
Measures and
Fuel Economy
Improvements



New Mobility
Choices and
Emerging
Transportation
Technologies

Local Priorities and Impacts*



*Based on 45 fleets reporting on calendar year 2023 activities, 52 fleets reporting for 20222, and 60 reporting for 2021

Local Contributions to National Goals

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Reduced:



Equivalent to Eliminating 1,117 Railcars of Coal Burned¹

National Goal: 20% Increase Relative to 2022

Regional Increase Achieved: 15%

Gallons of Gasoline Equivalent Reduced: 31.19 Million



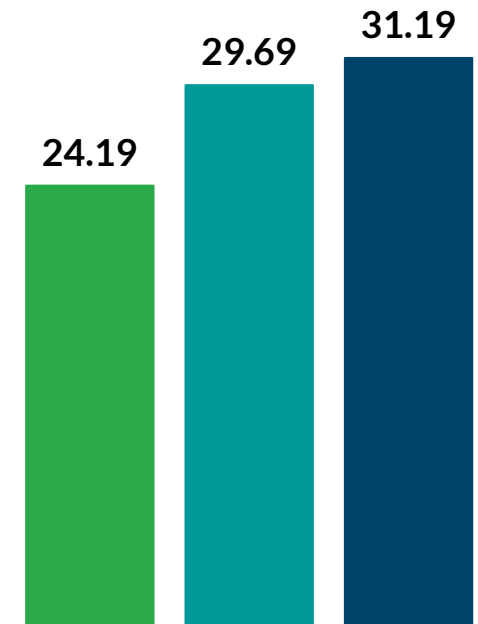
Equivalent to Eliminating 3,669 Tanker Trucks of Gasoline¹

National Goal: 16% Increase Relative to 2022

Regional Increase Achieved: 5% Increase over 2022

Gasoline Gallon
Equivalent Displaced
(in Millions)

■ 2021 ■ 2022 ■ 2023



Education, Outreach, and Stakeholder Recognition

Over 20 Conference Presentations/Workshops/Webinars

One-on-One Meetings to Provide Technical Assistance

National Drive Electric Week

Media Events and Interviews

Weekly email Blasts and Regular Social Media Posts

Fleet Recognition Program



Source: NCTCOG
2023 Fleet Recognition Awardees

Recent Developments

DFW Clean Cities Technical Advisory Committee Developed to Assist and Advise Coalition Staff:

- Assisting with Event/Project Promotion and Networking
- Increasing Stakeholder Collaboration/Engagement
- Informing Adoption of a Coalition Strategic Plan

Current Members Include Representatives From:

- Cities of Carrollton, Dallas, Denton, and Fort Worth
- DFW Airport
- Hood County Clean Air Coalition
- Kimley-Horn
- Northwest Propane Gas Co.
- Oncor Electric Delivery
- Parsons
- Hydrogen Industry Professional



Recent Developments

Developed DFW Clean Cities Strategic Plan to Give Framework to Next Four Years:



Define Coalition Structure Relative to NCTCOG as Host Agency
Outline Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Establish Coalition Goals for Next 4 Years

- Clean Vehicle Initiatives
- Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Initiatives
- Clean Energy Initiatives
- Organizational/Capacity-Building

Document Relationship to Other Department Plans

- Unified Planning Work Program
- Mobility Plan

Get Involved!

Stakeholder Meeting June 18

Seeking input on local mission statement

Additional Technical Advisory Committee Members Welcome

Submit interest through July 31

Department of Energy Redesignation Process Ongoing through October 2024

Seeking Partnership Agreements indicating commitment and support by September 30

More Information and Template Agreements at www.dfwcleancities.org



Dallas-Fort Worth
CLEAN CITIES

For More Information



Lori Clark

Senior Program Manager & DFW Clean Cities
Director

lclark@nctcog.org | 817-695-9232



Savana Nance

Senior Air Quality Planner

snance@nctcog.org | 682-433-0488



cleancities@nctcog.org



Amy Hodges

Principal Air Quality Planner

ahodges@nctcog.org | 817-704-2508



Jared Wright

Senior Air Quality Planner

jwright@nctcog.org | 817-608-2374



<https://www.dfwcleancities.org/>

Regional Transportation Council Attendance Roster
May 2023 - April 2024

RTC MEMBER	Entity	6/8/23	7/13/23	8/10/23	9/14/23	10/12/23	11/9/23	12/14/23	1/11/24	2/8/24	3/21/24	4/11/24	5/9/24
Daniel Alemán Jr (01/22)	Mesquite	P	P	E	E(R)	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P	A	P
Arfsten, Bruce (07/23)	Addison	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P	P	P
Steve Babick (06/22)	Carrollton	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)	E(R)
Dennis Bailey (02/21)	Rockwall County	P	E(R)	P	A	P	P	A	E	P	P	P	A
Rick Bailey (07/22)	Johnson County	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Adam Bazaldua (09/21)	Dallas	P	E	P	P	P	A	P	P	A	P	E	P
Elizabeth M. Beck (08/21)	Fort Worth	P	P	P	A	A	E	P	E(R)	P	E	P	A
Gyna Bivens (08/21)	Fort Worth	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Alan Blaylock (03/23)	Fort Worth	P	P	P	A	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	A
J. D. Clark (07/22)	Wise County	P	A	P	A	E(R)	P	P	E(R)	E(R)	P	P	A
Ceason Clemens (10/22)	TxDOT, Dallas	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Michael Crain (06/22)	Fort Worth	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	E(R)	P	P
Theresa Daniel (11/18)	Dallas County	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P	P	P
Jeff Davis (11/19)	Trinity Metro	E	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P	E(R)
Andy Eads (1/09)	Denton County	P	E	P	P	P	E	P	E	P	P	P	P
Michael Evans (2/23)	Mansfield	P	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Vernon Evans (4/24)	DFW Airport	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	A	P
Gary Fickes (12/10)	Tarrant County	P	E(R)	P	E(R)	E	E	P	P	P	P	E	P
George Fuller (07/17)	McKinney	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P	E	E	P	E	P	P
T.J. Gilmore (11/23)	DCTA	--	--	--	--	--	E(R)	P	P	P	P	A	A
Raul H. Gonzalez (09/21)	Arlington	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P
Barry L. Gordon (12/20)	Duncanville	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P	P	P
Lane Grayson (01/19)	Ellis County	P	E	E	P	P	P	E	P	A	P	P	P
Mojoy Haddad (10/14)	NTTA	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	E	A	P	P
Clay Lewis Jenkins (04/11)	Dallas County	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)	E(R)	P	P	E	P	P
Ron Jensen (06/13)	Grand Prairie	A	P	P	E(R)	P	E(R)	P	E	P	E(R)	P	P
Brandon Jones (05/21)	Lewisville	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	P	P
John Keating (12/19)	Frisco	E	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A
Brad LaMorgese (07/22)	Irving	E	P	A	E	P	P	P	E	E	E	E	P
Cara Mendelsohn (07/20)	Dallas	P	P	E(R)	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Ed Moore (07/22)	Garland	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	E	P	E
John Muns (6/23)	Plano	P	A	P	P	P	E	P	A	A	A	P	P
Omar Narvaez (09/21)	Dallas	P	E	P	E	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P
Manny Ramirez (1/23)	Tarrant County	E(R)	P	P	E	P	E	P	E	E	P	P	P
Tito Rodriguez (03/24)	Nrth Rch Hills	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	E
Jim R. Ross (07/21)	Arlington	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P

P= Present
A= Absent
R=Represented by Alternate
--= Not yet appointed

E= Excused Absence (personal illness, family emergency,
jury duty, business necessity, or fulfillment
of obligation arising out of elected service)

Regional Transportation Council Attendance Roster
May 2023 - April 2024

RTC MEMBER	Entity	6/8/23	7/13/23	8/10/23	9/14/23	10/12/23	11/9/23	12/14/23	1/11/24	2/8/24	3/21/24	4/11/24	5/9/24
David Salazar (10/22)	TxDOT, FW	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Chris Schulmeister (07/20)	Allen	P	A(R)	P	P	E(R)	P	A	P	P	P	P	P
Gary Slagel (11/23)	DART	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Jeremy Tompkins (10/19)	Eules	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P	P	P
William Tsao (3/17)	Dallas	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P
Watts, Chris (12/22)	Denton	P	P	P	E	P	E	A	E	A	A	A	A
Webb, Duncan (6/11)	Collin County	P	E(R)	E(R)	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P
Chad West (11/22)	Dallas	A	E	P	A	E	P	P	P	E	P	A(R)	P

Note: Date in parenthesis indicates when member was
1st eligible to attend RTC meetings

P= Present
A= Absent
R=Represented by Alternate
--= Not yet appointed

E= Excused Absence (personal illness, family emergency,
jury duty, business necessity, or fulfillment
of obligation arising out of elected service)

Surface Transportation Technical Committee Attendance Roster
May 2023 - May 2024

STTC MEMBERS	Entity	05/26/23	06/23/23	7/28/23	8/25/23	9/22/23	10/27/23	12/8/23	1/26/24	2/23/24	03/22/24	04/26/24	5/24/2024
Joe Atwood	Hood County	P	P	P	A	A	A	A	P	A	P	P	P
Melissa Baker	Irving	R	P	P	P	R	P	P	P	R	R	E	P
Micah Baker	Dallas County	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
David Boski	Mansfield	A	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	A	R	R
Shon Brooks	Waxahachie	A	A	A	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	A
Tanya Brooks	DART	R	A	P	A	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Matt Bryant	City of Duncaville	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P
Daniel Burnham	Arlington	R	R	P	P	P	A	P	R	P	P	P	R
Farhan Butt	Denton	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	P	P
Brenda Callaway	Rockwall County	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	P	P
Travis Campbell	TxDOT Dallas	--	--	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P
Robert Cohen	Southlake	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	P	A	A
John Cordary, Jr.	TxDOT FW	E	A	E	P	P	A	P	E	P	P	A	P
Clarence Daugherty	Collin County	P	P	P	R	P	R	A	P	P	P	P	R
Chad Davis	Wise County	A	P	P	P	A	A	P	P	A	P	A	A
Arturo Del Castillo	Dallas	E	P	P	P	A	P	R	R	P	P	P	P
Pritam Deshmukh	Richardson	R	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E
Caryl DeVries	Grand Prairie	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Greg Dickens	Hurst	A	A	R	P	A	A	R	R	A	A	A	R
Phil Dupler	FWTA	P	P	P	P	P	R	P	P	P	P	P	P
Chad Edwards	Trinity Metro	P	P	P	P	E	P	R	P	R	P	P	P
Martiza Figy	Dallas	--	--	--	--	--	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Eric Fladager	Fort Worth	P	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	P	A	P	P
Chris Flanigan	Allen	P	P	P	A	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Austin Frith	DCTA	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	P	P	R
Ricardo Gonzalez	TxDOT FW	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Gary Graham	McKinney	A	A	P	P	P	R	P	P	P	R	P	R
Tom Hammons	Carrollton	P	A	A	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P
Ron Hartline	The Colony	A	P	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	P	P	A
Barry Heard	Kaufman County	P	A	A	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P
Shannon Hicks	Addison	R	R	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A
Matthew Hotelling	Flower Mound	R	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
John Hudspeth	TxDOT Dallas	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Jeremy Hutt	Cleburne	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	P	P	A	P	P
Thuan Huynh	McKinney	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	R
Joseph Jackson	Tarrant County	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	A
Joel James	NTTA	P	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	R	P
William Janney	Frisco	R	P	A	P	P	A	P	A	A	P	P	P

P=Present A=Absent R=Represented E=Excused (personal illness, family emergency, jury duty, business necessity)
-- =Not yet eligible to attend *Meeting held by video/audio conference. Individual attendance not taken.

Surface Transportation Technical Committee Attendance Roster

May 2023 - May 2024

STTC MEMBERS	Entity	05/26/23	06/23/23	7/28/23	8/25/23	9/22/23	10/27/23	12/8/23	1/26/24	2/23/24	03/22/24	04/26/24	5/24/2024
Kelly Johnson	NTTA	A	P	A	A	P	A	P	P	A	A	A	A
Major L. Jones	Eules	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	A	A	P	A
Gus Khankarli	Dallas	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Alonzo Liñán	Keller	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P
Eron Linn	DART	A	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	E
Clay Lipscomb	Plano	P	P	P	P	A	P	A	R	P	P	P	A
Paul Luedtke	Garland	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	E
Stanford Lynch	Hunt County	A	A	A	P	R	P	R	P	P	A	R	P
Chad Marbut	Weatherford	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Alberto Mares	Ellis County	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A
Wes McClure	Mesquite	A	R	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Brian Moen	Frisco	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Mark Nelson	Richardson	E	P	P	R	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Jim O'Connor	Irving	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Alfredo Ortiz	Dallas	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	P	A	A
Cintia Ortiz	Parker County	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	P	P
Dipak Patel	Lancaster	A	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	A	P
Martin Phillips	Fort Worth	P	P	P	R	E	E	P	P	E	P	E	P
John Polster	Denton County	P	A	A	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	A	A
Kelly Porter	Fort Worth	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P
Tim Porter	Wylie	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	R	R	P
Elizabeth Reynolds	Grapevine	--	--	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Jahor Roy	Mesquite	--	--	--	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P
Greg Royster	DFW Int. Airport	A	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P
Kathryn Rush	Dallas	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	P	R	P	P	A
David Salmon	Lewisville	A	P	R	P	R	P	R	P	P	R	A	R
Brian Shewski	Plano	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	R	P
Walter Shumac, III	Grand Prairie	P	P	E	P	P	P	A	P	P	E	P	P
Ray Silva-Reyes	Farmers Branch	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P
Randy Skinner	Tarrant County	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	A	E	--	--
Chelsea St. Louis	Fort Worth	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	P	P
Cheryl Taylor	Bedford	P	A	A	A	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	A
Errick Thompson	Burleson	--	--	--	--	--	--	A	P	P	P	P	P
Caleb Thornhill	Plano	P	P	P	A	R	P	A	P	P	A	P	P
Press Tompkins	Greenville	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Dave Trimbrell	Garland												E
Jennifer VanderLaan	Johnson County	P	P	A	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Gregory Van	Haltom City	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	R	P
Daniel Vedral	Irving	P	P	R	P	R	P	P	P	P	P	E	P
Caroline Waggoner	North Richland	P	P	P	A	A	A	A	P	P	P	P	A
Jana Wentzel	Arlington	P	P	R	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Robert Woodbury	Cedar Hill	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	A	P	A	R	P

P=Present A=Absent R=Represented E=Excused (personal illness, family emergency, jury duty, business necessity)

-- =Not yet eligible to attend *Meeting held by video/audio conference. Individual attendance not taken.

Surface Transportation Technical Committee Attendance Roster
May 2023 - May 2024

STTC MEMBERS	Entity	05/26/23	06/23/23	7/28/23	8/25/23	9/22/23	10/27/23	12/8/23	1/26/24	2/23/24	03/22/24	04/26/24	5/24/2024
Larry Wright	Colleyville	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Jamie Zech	TCEQ	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A

P=Present A=Absent R=Represented E=Excused (personal illness, family emergency, jury duty, business necessity)
 -- =Not yet eligible to attend *Meeting held by video/audio conference. Individual attendance not taken.

MINUTES

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

April 26, 2024

The Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) met on Friday, April 26, 2024, at 1:30 pm, in the Transportation Council Room of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). The following STTC members or representatives were present: Joe Atwood, James Rogge (representing David Boski), Shon Brooks, Tanya Brooks, Daniel Burnham, Farhan Butt, Brenda Callaway, Travis Campbell, Clarence Daugherty, Arturo Del Castillo, Pritam Deshmukh, Caryl DeVries, Phil Dupler, Chad Edwards, Eric Fladager, Chris Flanigan, Austin Frith, Ricardo Gonzalez, Gary Graham, Tom Hammons, Brian McNulty (representing Ron Hartline), Barry Heard, Matthew Hotelling, John D. Hudspeth, Jeremy Hutt, Thuan Huynh, Joseph Jackson, Brian SanFilippo (representing Joel James), William Janney, Major L. Jones, Gus Khankarli, Eron Linn, Clay Lipscomb, Paul Luedtke, Chris Bosco (representing Stanford Lynch), Chad Marbut, Alberto Mares, Wes McClure, Brian Moen, Mark Nelson, Jim O'Connor, Cintia Ortiz, Kelly Porter, Thank Nguyen (representing Tim Porter), Elizabeth Reynolds, Jahor Roy, Kathryn Rush, James Ryan Sartor, Chad Ostrander (representing Brian Shewski), Walter Shumac, III, Chelsea St. Louis, Errick Thompson, Caleb Thornhill, Jennifer VanderLaan, Autumn Permenter (representing Gregory Van Nieuwenhuize), Caroline Waggoner, Jana Wentzel, and Brian Rentsch (representing Robert Woodbury).

Others present at the meeting were: Vickie Alexander, Valerie Alvarado, Jason Brown, Jackie Castillo, Aaron Cedar, Brayan Cervantes, Dina Colarossi, Brian Dell, Amber Ellis, Kevin Feldt, John Godwin, Christie Gotti, Brian Jahn, Zachary Joseph, Siddheoh Kendale, Frances Key, Ken Kirkpatrick, Chris Klaus, Dan Lamers, Bradley LeCureux, Karina Maldonado, Anthony Moffa, Jim Moffitt, Michael Morris, Chandra Muruwandham, Jeff Neal, Quang Nguyen, Dylan Niles, Tim Palermo, Ezra Pratt, Vercie Pruitt-Jenkins, Kyle Roy, Brian Shamburger, Toni Stehling, Daniella Tower, Jeff Whitlock, and Amanda Wilson.

1. **Approval of the March 22, 2024, Minutes:** The minutes of the March 22, 2024, meeting were approved as submitted in Electronic Item 1. Kelly Porter (M); Jim O'Connor (S). The motion passed unanimously.
2. **Consent Agenda:** The following items were included on the Consent Agenda:
 - 2.1. **Endorsement of Additional Transportation Alternative Set-Aside Funding for Greenville Avenue Trail Project as Part of Cotton Belt Trail:** A recommendation was requested for an endorsement of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of \$1,092,500 in additional Transportation Alternative Set-Aside (TASA) funds along with 218,500 in Transportation Development Credits for the existing RTC-funded Greenville Avenue Multimodal Improvements Project in Richardson (TIP 40071/CSJ 0918-47-323).

A motion was made to recommend endorsement of the Regional Transportation approval of Item 2.1 on the Consent Agenda. Eron Linn (M); Mark Nelson (S). The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Reconnecting Communities Update:** Christie Gotti requested a recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC's) approval to cover \$15 million funding gap from the \$80 million (of the \$95 million requested) in Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) program funds. Christie provided a breakdown of the revised allocation of federal funds for the funding for the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) region's "Bridging Highway Divides for the DFW Communities" application: Klyde Warren Park (Phase 2) – expanding to West Saint. Paul street for \$20 million; Southern Gateway (Phase 2) for \$25 million; Interstate Highway (IH) 30: Farmers Market/Three Fingers for \$20 million; and McKinney State Highway 5 for \$15 million. Christie noted for the IH 30: Farmers Market/Three Fingers, in February of 2024, the RTC approved a \$30 million Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) on this facility, instead will grant the \$5 million needed for the project. Christie mentioned the request was to fill the gap with RTC local funding resources while working on a letter of assignment between North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), United States Department of Transportation, and the lead and implementing agency, the Texas Department of Transportation. An overview of the proposed project was contained in Electronic Item 3.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval An additional \$15 million of Surface Transportation Block Grant funds to include in the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods awarded project funding; and administratively amend Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) and Statewide TIP, as well as other planning and administrative documents to include the amended funding Gary Graham (M); Gus Khankarli (S). The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Endorsement of Fiscal Year 2025 – 2026 Multimodal Projects Discretionary Grant Program:** Jeff Neal requested an endorsement of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC's) approval of projects to be submitted for funding consideration through the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) program. A total of \$5.2 billion program solicits project applications for three funding opportunities: \$1.7 million for the National Infrastructure Project Assistance (MEGA), \$2.7 for the Nationally Significant Multimodal Freight and Highway Projects Grant program (INFRA), and \$780 million for the Rural Surface Transportation Grant program (RURAL) with applications due on May 6, 2024. For the Dallas County Inland Port (DCIP) Multimodal Connectivity Project, all of the funding amounts and sources are the same as they were for Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant, except that staff will submit the RURAL Grant application on behalf of Dallas County. NCTCOG proposes to also resubmit the AllianceTexas Smart Port Project for the INFRA Grant. He mentioned that the FY25-26 MPDG Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) was released on March 26, 2024, and RTC signed letters of support for projects submitted by partners are due April 24, 2024. Jeff also highlighted the cost and funding characteristics of the State Highway 183 Segment 2E project, indicating that while the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) anticipates being a co-applicant on Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT's) MEGA Grant submittal, no direct non-federal funding contribution from the RTC is included. Additional program, application requirements, and candidate project details were included in Electronic Item 4, while more comprehensive information can be obtained at: <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/mpdg-program>.

A motion was made to approve the endorsement of the Regional Transportation Council's approval for the submittal of proposed Multimodal Projects Discretionary Grant (MPDG) program applications, with the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) as the applicant for two projects and co-applicant for another project; allocation of previous

Regional Transportation Council (RTC) funds: AllianceTexas Smart Port Project & Dallas County Inland Port (DCIP) Multimodal Connectivity Project – same as FY 23/24 MPDG (INFRA) & FY 24 RAISE applications, respectively, but to also include as contingency responsibility for \$10,900,000 in non-Federal funds to partner with local/private entities for the AllianceTexas Smart Port Project only; and administratively amend Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide TIP, as well as other planning/administrative documents, to include proposed projects if selected for FY 25-26 MPDG program awards. Gus Khankarli (M); Kelly Porter (S). The motion passed unanimously.

5. **Endorsement of the Congestion Relief Grant Program:** Natalie Bettger requested an endorsement of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC's) approval of a regional project submittal and match funds for the fiscal year (FY) 2024 Congestion Relief Grant (CRG) Program. The program is a continuation of the Congestion Relief Grant program with \$150 million available; a minimum award of \$10 million per grant with a 20 percent local match required, but the project must be obligated by September 30, 2027. A Notice of Funding Opportunity was released on February 21, 2024, and applications were due on April 22, 2024. The goals for the relief program include improving intermodal integration with highway, highway operations, and highway performance; reducing or shifting highway users to off-peak travel times or to non-highway travel modes during peak travel times; and pricing of, or based on, as applicable to parking, use of roadway, including in designated geographic zones, or congestion. The vision for the program is to determine whether projects are equitable to the traveling public and affected communities, consider and mitigate any safety impacts, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fine particulate matter, and consider and mitigate any potential adverse financial impacts to low-income drivers. Natalie mentioned the location and the scope on congestion corridors such as: United States 75, Interstate Highway (IH) 635E, IH 35W, IH 35E, and IH 30. The program hopes to utilize the technology to verify and offer incentives to change travel behavior for guaranteed transit on-time arrival, shift from car to transit, shift in vehicle time of day traveling, and shift in truck time of day traveling. She mentioned the proposed total budget of \$20 million with federal funds and requested 4 million in Transportation Development Credits (TDCs) in lieu of the required 20 percent match. Electronic Item 5 provided more details.

A motion was made to approve the endorsement of the Regional Transportation Council's approval for the submittal of the Dallas-Fort Worth Congestion Relief Program Proposal for funding consideration through the FY24 Congestion Relief Grant Program of \$20 million and 4 million Transportation Development Credits, and to administratively amend the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide TIP, as well as other planning and administrative documents, to include the proposed project if selected for an FY24 Congestion Relief Grant Program. Mark Nelson(M); Paul Luedtke (S). The motion passed unanimously.

6. **Project Status Report: Fiscal Year 2024 Project Tracking and Metropolitan Planning Organization Milestone Policy Round 2:** Brian Dell requested a recommendation for the Regional Transportation Council (RTC's) approval of various updates to Milestone Policy project deadlines. Brian introduced the two components of the Project Status Report: the MPO Milestone Policy Round 2 Update and FY2024 Project Tracking Update. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Milestone Policy focuses on projects funded for 10 plus years that have not gone to construction. FY2024 Project Tracking focuses on projects slated for implementation in FY2024, and highlights potential problems in order to prevent delays, provides earlier monitoring, and enables the RTC to take corrective actions to avoid accumulation of carryover balances. Brian mentioned there were 8 projects on the

MPO Milestone Policy list that have not gone to construction totaling \$272 million. Of those, one project was scheduled for letting in FY2024 and seven are scheduled for letting in FY2025 or beyond. He briefly went through the risk ratings of the projects. Brian provided a breakdown of the three projects requiring action. The first project is a Union Pacific (UP) Railroad Crossing Project in Haltom City. In 2021, Haltom City informed the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) that work had started at the Haltom Road location and work at Glenview Drive was pending approval by UP. As a result, the project was not included in the final Milestone Policy Round 2 RTC action item. NCTCOG was later informed that work had not started at either location. The project is also on the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Inactive List due to no requests for reimbursement being submitted for over a year. Staff's recommendations were to put the project on Milestone Policy list for tracking and require Haltom City's City Council to reaffirm its commitment to the project with a resolution (must include confirmation that local match is still available and a schedule by which the City commits to implement the project). The second project is Riverfront Boulevard in Dallas County. An updated letting deadline of December 2023 was approved in August 2022, but franchise utility coordination and review further delayed the project and led to the deadline being missed and a funding shortfall of \$14,810,939 to accrue. Staff's recommendation was to approve \$11,984,662 of additional Dallas County Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) funds to address the shortfall, with Dallas County contributing an additional \$2,000,000 and City of Dallas contributing \$826,277, and to extend the letting deadline to December 2024. The third project, US 377 from South of Farmers Market 1171 to Crawford Road was unfunded when the Milestone Policy Round 2 list was approved by the RTC. Therefore, a deadline was not established. Since then, the project was funded via the 2023 10-Year Plan Update. The staff's recommendation was to establish a letting deadline of September 2027 for this project based on feedback from TxDOT-Dallas. Brian briefly went through the four funding categories being tracked as part of the FY2024 Project Tracking initiative. The first category, Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funding, has \$58 million available with \$50.4 million being obligated. It was noted that half of the project phases have been pushed out and only 8 phases were obligated. The second category, Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funding, has \$91.7 million of available funding with \$91.0 million obligated. Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TASA) funding has \$58.3 million available with \$26.3 million obligated. The fourth category, Carbon Reduction Program, has \$55 million available with \$35.3 million obligated. Additional details provided in Electronic Item 6.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council's (RTC) approval of staff recommendations detailed in slides 6-8 of the presentation in Electronic Item 6, and to allow staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) along with other administrative/planning documents as needed to incorporate any changes to affected projects. Gus Khankarli (M); Jim O'Connor (S). The motion passed unanimously.

7. **Director of Transportation Report on Selected Items:** Michael Moris announced a couple items to celebrate, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) partnered with the Trinity Metro for the grand opening of the Trinity Lakes Station. Michael congratulated Karla Windsor, Sydnee Mangini, and Stuart Burzette of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) for writing the applications that won four proposals, and the reason for the visit from Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg on April 4, 2024. The four proposals for the \$80 million that was received for funding on four pedestrian caps, including Klyde Warren Park (Phase 2), Southern Gateway (Phase 2), Interstate Highway 30 Farmers Market "Three Fingers", and McKinney State Highway 5. Transit 2.0 implementation's next

steps as the members will be contacted to set up their meetings in the future. There're seven tasks with time to time on the progress made by those particular efforts. If anyone wants to make sure you have an active voice in that process, please let Toni Stehling know and we'll make sure you get engaged with the work that the consultants are doing. Michael announced and expressed appreciation for Shannon Stevenson. She is leaving our organization after 22 years and going back to Norman, OK, to be the assistant city manager of Norman, OK. Michael requested help with the idea with a particular notion to improve participation at the Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) meetings. If you have any ideas one way or the other, to keep it the same, or is there a way to make better use of our time where we could learn more about a particular subject, to please let Michael or Toni Stehling know either way. Michael also announced we are celebrating 50 years as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The celebration lunch will be held during the Irving Summit that is scheduled on the regular RTC scheduled meeting day. Walter Shumac, III, congratulated Michael and NCTCOG, on the 50 years. Michael briefed the Committee on the RTC Bylaws related to the weighted voting for the Cities of Dallas and Fort Worth. Michael sought the Mayor's input from the City of Dallas and the City of Fort Worth, with a tremendous amount of discussion and counsel, the RTC will not be readjusting the voting makeup. With Ken Kirkpatrick's leadership, this item will just be moved to the next Bylaw revision in 2026. Michael mentioned Dan Kessler will be showing the new demographics for the new 2050 plan in the future.

8. **Regional Transportation Council Policy – Temporary Suspension of Dynamic Pricing of Managed Lanes During Reconstruction:** Dan Lamers introduced a policy allowing for the suspension of dynamic pricing of managed lanes during major corridor reconstruction where managed lanes operate. The current managed lanes pricing policy, was last updated in 2016, specifies that dynamic pricing with market-based tolls be applied after initially opening. The proposed Policy R24-01, allows the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) District Engineer to temporarily suspend dynamic pricing during times of reconstruction with the idea of safety and potential driver confusion are primary considerations, following reconstruction, dynamic pricing should be restored, and request use of public outreach campaign to communicate the temporary rate structure. Considerations for temporary rate structure depend on the type of reconstruction; adjustment likely needed only under full facility reconstruction for the duration of construction activities with consistency of rates by facility direction, there's a need for fixed-rate structure by time of day and day of week, for temporary signage, and to continue revenue collection to be in compliance with federal or state laws and regulations. A draft of the policy that will be proposed for the Surface Transportation Technical Committee's consideration next month, was included in Electronic Item 8.
9. **2025 – 2028 Transportation Improvement Program Draft Listings:** Brian Dell briefed the Committee on the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) development process. Brian talked about the cooperative effort required between the North Central Texas Council of Governments, local governments, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Transit agencies, and transportation agencies to develop the TIP. He provided an overview of the TIP development process. Two focus areas were highlighted. The first is ensuring that updates to projects provided by agencies and from recent/pending TIP modifications are incorporated, and financially constraining the TIP to the 2025 Unified Transportation Program (UTP) draft allocations plus anticipated carryover funding. The second focus area covered is timely implementation of projects, which includes closely reviewing projects on the MPO Milestone Policy List (and those at risk of getting on the list in the future), projects with Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) and/or Surface

Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds (to avoid accumulation of carryover balances), and projects with Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TASA) funds (to avoid funding lapses). Brian introduced the Justice 40 Initiative, part of Executive Order 14008 signed in 2021, that reiterates a call for environmental justice, particularly related to climate change. Justice40 calls for 40 percent of the benefits of certain federal investments to flow to disadvantaged communities. It was noted that the RTC has funding authority over three categories that fall under Justice40: Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside, and Carbon Reduction Program. Brian reported that the Dallas-Fort Worth region exceeds the target in each category when looking at the proportion of funding that impacts low income and minority areas in the region. The TIP scope of programming was covered. The 2025-2028 TIP (Roadway and Transit) contains \$10 billion dollars of projects. 990 active projects are being tracked, with 528 active projects in 2025-2045, and 67 agencies implementing those projects. Brian highlighted the project progress since the 2023–2026 TIP development: 162 have let (\$4.31 billion) and of those, 94 were local lets (\$0.66 Billion) and 68 were state lets (\$3.65 Billion). Brian also highlighted the projects that have been completed since the development of the 2023-2026 TIP: 150 have been completed (\$2.40 billion) and of those, 110 were locally implemented projects (\$0.54 billion) and 40 were state implemented projects (\$1.86 billion). Brian strongly encouraged everyone to review the listings to ensure projects were listed correctly. It was emphasized that if a project does not have funding in FY2025, FY2026, FY2027, or FY2028, it will not be in the new TIP. He also mentioned if the project is in FY2024 projects will not automatically carry over and projects in FY2029 and later will be in the environmental clearance appendix of the TIP (Appendix D). The TIP development schedule was covered, with May 3, 2024, being flagged as the deadline for providing comments on draft listings to ensure they could be incorporated prior to public involvement. Electronic Item 9 contained an overview of the TIP development process, focus areas, and schedule, and the financially constrained draft project listings for the 2025-2028 TIP are available at the following weblink: <https://www.nctcog.org/trans/funds/tip/transportation-improvement-program-docs/2025-2028tip>. Christie Gotti highly encouraged Committee members to answer or respond to questions on projects to ensure they are listed correctly.

- 10. Air Quality and Safety Demonstration Projects:** Anthony Moffa provided information efforts to develop three demonstration projects, including vehicle safety components, metal license plates, and heavy-duty diesel vehicle emissions systems. Anthony briefed the Committee on the Car Care Safety Integration, license plates readers, and truck assessment goods movement program. Our region is in the non-attainment ozone and currently does not meet two Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards for 2008 and 2015. The Car Care Safety Integration’s budget of \$200,000 will provide the public with education on the importance of safety components and replacing as needed along with partnering with automotive shops to hold clinics to inspect and replace certain safety components to be emphasized. Anthony mentioned the noncommercial vehicle safety inspections to be phased out January 1, 2025, due to the House Bill (HB) 3297 passed during the 88th Legislative Session. He mentioned more details were provided in Electronic Item 11.3 for the Car Care Safety program. The Licensed Plate Readers with the budget of \$200,000, for the assessment of metal license plate fraud occurring in the region, and to evaluate plates in the region using available license plate reading technology to investigate potential metal license plate fraud. The passing of HB 718 will eliminate paper license plates on July 1, 2025. The idea is to be proactive and coordinate with law enforcement to obtain plate readers to evaluate the data that’s collected for potential fraud trends. The Truck Assessment and Goods Movement Program with the budget of \$600,000, was designed to assess the amount of heavy-duty diesel (HDD) vehicle emissions component tampering

occurring in our region with research conducted by the EPA in our region. Tampered vehicles emit far greater emissions, potentially leading to the disconnect between regional monitors and air chemistry modeling. An analysis will determine how bad it is by what is collected. North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) will partner with law enforcement to scan vehicles that operate in our region to purchase equipment that quickly detects HDD emissions tampering. He provided the schedule by mentioning this agenda item will be brought for action at the May Surface Transportation Technical Committee, June's Regional Transportation Council and Executive Board meetings with implementation starting in early Fiscal Year 2025. More details can be found in Electronic Item 10.

11. **Fast Facts:** The following fast facts were provided by NCTCOG staff:

Camille Fountain highlighted that Electronic Item 11.1 contained a letter requesting that you confirm the appropriate staff to continue serving along with your agency's current artifact member of the Regional Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC). Membership appointment deadline, May 24, 2024. RSAC meets quarterly before the Surface Transportation Council Meetings. July 26, 2024, is the next scheduled meeting.

Brayan Cervantes briefed the Committee on the Deep Ellum District Parking Study to increase the efficiency of the events occurring, decrease the congestion, and increase the circulation. Recommendations, data collection, and priorities for stakeholders to be present in order to advance parking management strategies within the district provided at: ([North Central Texas Council of Governments - Deep Ellum Parking Study \(nctcog.org\)](https://www.nctcog.org/deep-ellum-parking-study)).

Bradley LeCurex provided information on the Air Quality Project Spotlight: Multimodal Drone Delivery, led by the City of Arlington, to test and evaluate new mobility options for the delivery of essential food items to people that are historically disadvantaged, mobility challenged, or lack of reliable means of transportation. These items were delivered through a combination of vertical takeoff and landing drones, as well as autonomous ground-based drones with the cargo Bay. There was a workshop on May 8, 2024, at Vandergriff Park in Arlington. More information was provided in Electronic Item 11.2.

Bradley LeCurex announced the 2024 heavy Duty Clean Vehicle Grant program is now open. An Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) program that will fund the replacement of class six and seven nonzero emission vehicles with zero emission models. The EPA held an informational webinar on this opportunity on Thursday, April 30, 2024, from 3:00 pm. The deadline to apply for this program is July 25, 2024. They will be prioritizing class six and seven school bus replacements, relay this information to any school districts in your area, but don't discourage any fleets from considering this opportunity. Details provided at www.nctcog.org/aqfunding. Bradley mentioned North Central Texas Council of Governments, along with the University of Texas at Arlington, and the Texas Hydrogen Alliance, will be holding a hydrogen user forum on June 11, 2024, from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm. The form will allow industry leaders to peer exchange on the current state and the future state of hydrogen and utility planners will be hearing from the industry so that they may be better prepared to serve their future needs. To register for this event, visit: <https://www.dfwcleancities.org/events>.

Valerie Alvarado provided information on the spring national Car Care Month in April, North Central Texas Council of Governments, Transportation Department, Car Care Awareness Campaign empowers community members to be part of the Regional Air Quality solution by providing opportunities to learn more about their vehicles and the importance of proper

vehicle maintenance. To help spread the word about the Car Care Awareness campaign staff prepared an educational toolkit with social media, messages, articles, images and other materials from municipalities and communities organizations to share, both available in English and Spanish, the toolkit website at: (<https://www.ntxcare.org/Toolkit>).

Daniela Tower provided a brief update of the current ozone season. We are two months into the 2024 season, please note that there is still a design value of 71 noted, we are in between 72 at the leading monitors in Granbury and Pilot Point with no exceedance days. More details were provided in Electronic Item 11.3.

Jackie Castillo announced a hybrid public meeting was held here on Monday, March 11th, 2024. Staff presented information related to broadband as a transportation service, recent grant awards for hydrogen electric vehicle infrastructure projects, Dallas-Fort Worth air quality improvement plan, bike to school day and changing mobility. Electronic item 11.4 contained a collection of comments received on the mentioned topics. Additionally, a public meeting was hosted on Monday, May 13, 2024, at noon. Staff presented information related to transportation planning and air quality initiatives. More information was provided in Electronic Item 11.5. The public comment report is a collection of general comments submitted by members of the public from Tuesday, February 20th through Tuesday, March 19th. More information was provided in Electronic Item 11.6.

Written Progress Reports were provided in Electronic Item 11.7.

12. **Other Business (Old or New)**: There was no discussion on this item.
13. **Next Meeting**: The next meeting of the Surface Transportation Technical Committee is scheduled for 1:30 pm on May 24, 2024.

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 PM.