

DFW HIGH-SPEED UPDATE



2024 NEWSLETTER, ISSUE #2

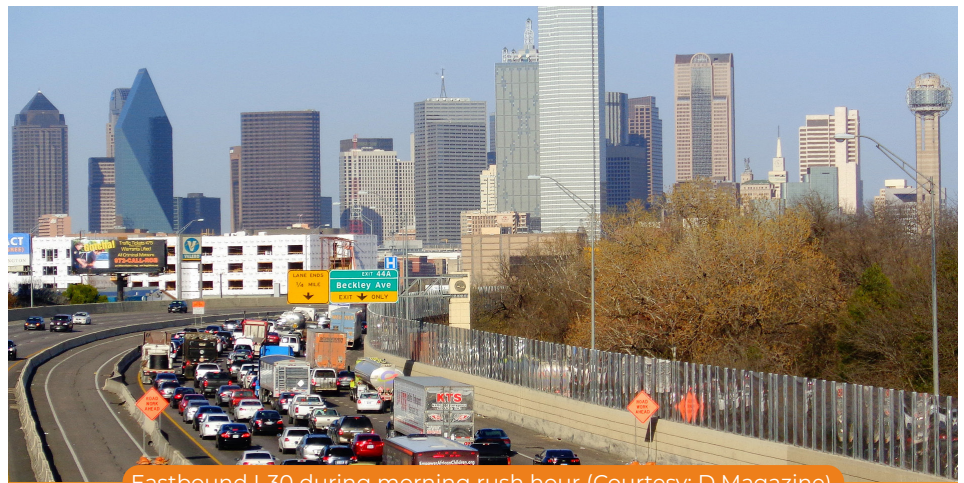
Dallas-Fort Worth's Growth: A Blessing and a Challenge

Adding four million people to already congested roadways in a matter of 20 years requires innovative transportation solutions. Over eight million residents call Dallas-Fort Worth home, with the population projected to balloon to almost 12 million by 2045.

"This projection takes into account all planned roadway improvements between now and 2045," explains Michael Morris, P.E., North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Transportation Director. "Because of employment and population growth, we're going to see additional congestion in the region."

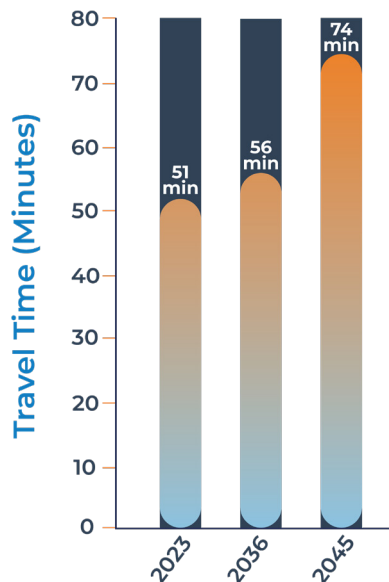
Now that Fort Worth has officially surpassed 1 million residents, Dallas-Fort Worth is the only metro area in the nation with two cities of over 1 million people.

What should be a 30-minute drive between downtown Fort Worth and downtown Dallas currently takes approximately 51 minutes during rush hour. This will jump to 74 minutes by 2045 (a 45% increase), even with planned roadway improvements.



Eastbound I-30 during morning rush hour (Courtesy: D Magazine)

Rush Hour Travel Time on I-30 between Downtown Dallas and Downtown Fort Worth



Curious?

Check out where the largest crowds gather, arriving in their cars

Entertainment venues (pg. 4)
Academic institutions (pg. 5)

Flora and Fauna

Environmental study update (pg. 7)

Let's talk about high-speed rail

Public meeting scheduled for Sept. 9 (pg. 11)

See *Dallas-Fort Worth's Growth*, pg. 2

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Dallas-Fort Worth's Growth (Cont.)

"As time goes on, we'll experience congestion continuing to increase, especially between Fort Worth and Dallas, even though three system freeways connect them: I-20, I-30, and SH 183," points out Morris.

DFW Leads State in Traffic Congestion

According to the Texas A&M Transportation Institute, Dallas-Fort Worth contains 39 of the 100 most congested roadways in the state, more than any other metro area. Many are in Dallas, Fort Worth, and Arlington's dense urban areas, including portions of I-30.

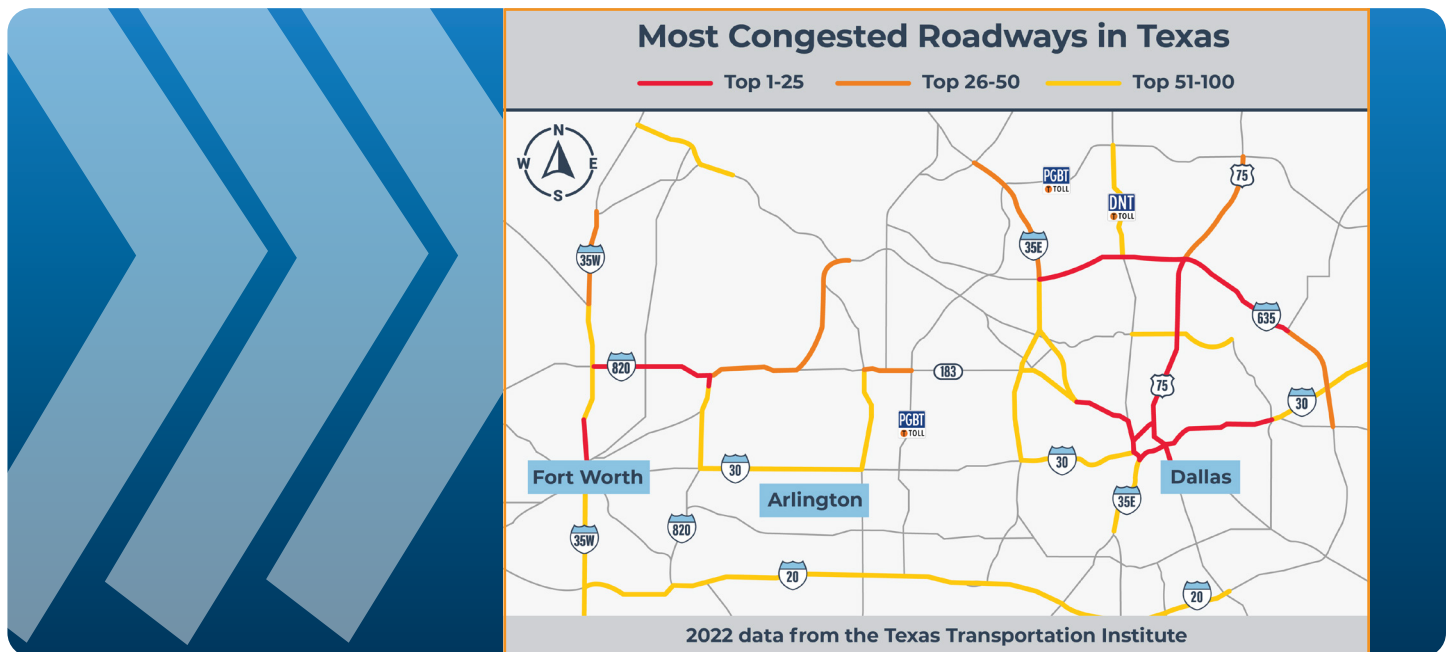
Alternatively, high-speed rail connecting the downtown areas will take just over 20 minutes (or 25 minutes with a stop in Arlington). Unlike highways, which have variable travel times depending on rush hour, bad weather, and crashes, high-speed rail has a consistent travel time regardless of external factors.



I-35W outside downtown Fort Worth (Courtesy: Fort Worth Star-Telegram)



I-635 between Webb Chapel Rd. and Marsh Ln. (Courtesy: Dallas Morning News)



Population Explosion Brings Traffic Headaches

Though official NCTCOG long-term estimates of metropolitan area growth for 2100 do not yet exist, other sources dealing with growth and relocations estimate that Dallas-Fort Worth is projected to be the largest metro area in the entire U.S. by 2100. According to these sources, Dallas-Fort Worth is projected to reach nearly 34 million residents—a monstrous quadrupling of its current population in 75 years.

“It’s impossible to accurately forecast traffic congestion that far in the future, but it’s clear it will only get worse based on these projections,” says Brendon Wheeler P.E., CFM, NCTCOG Program Manager. “New residents are quickly outpacing the road capacity we can add by widening freeways, so high-speed rail will help fill that gap in demand and mitigate increases in traffic congestion, crashes, and fatalities.”



Spur 366 in downtown Dallas (Courtesy: Dallas Morning News)

Texas Continues to Boom



West 7th Street in the Fort Worth Cultural District (Courtesy: Fort Worth Weekly)

To close out the new top three largest metros in 2100, the Houston metro is projected to reach over 33 million residents while the Austin area surpasses 22 million. Texas will swell to approximately 96 million people in 2100, making it by far the largest state in the nation.



Northbound I-35W in Fort Worth (Courtesy: Fort Worth Star-Telegram)

“This population explosion, both regionally and statewide, makes investments in new modes of transportation imperative,” says Ian Bryant, AICP, HNTB Project Manager. “If we wait to implement high-speed rail until we have already tripled or quadrupled in size, we’ll be far too late. Future-proofing our transportation network requires foresight and action today.”

World-Class Destinations Draw Massive Crowds

Dallas-Fort Worth is home to some of the world’s best entertainment, cultural, and educational institutions. On top of its 8.5 million residents, a whopping 50 million visitors are welcomed annually to the region. Major attractions include the Stockyards in Fort Worth and the State Fair of Texas in Dallas, with nine million and over two million annual visitors, respectively.

See *World Class Destinations*, pg. 5



Cotton Bowl Stadium at capacity for the annual Red River Rivalry (Courtesy: WFAA)

Many of the region’s major destinations are concentrated along the I-30 corridor,” notes Morris. “Imagine if high-speed rail could leverage economies of scale to connect stadiums and convention centers. As our region continues to grow, we should expect to host more global events like the 2026 FIFA World Cup games.”



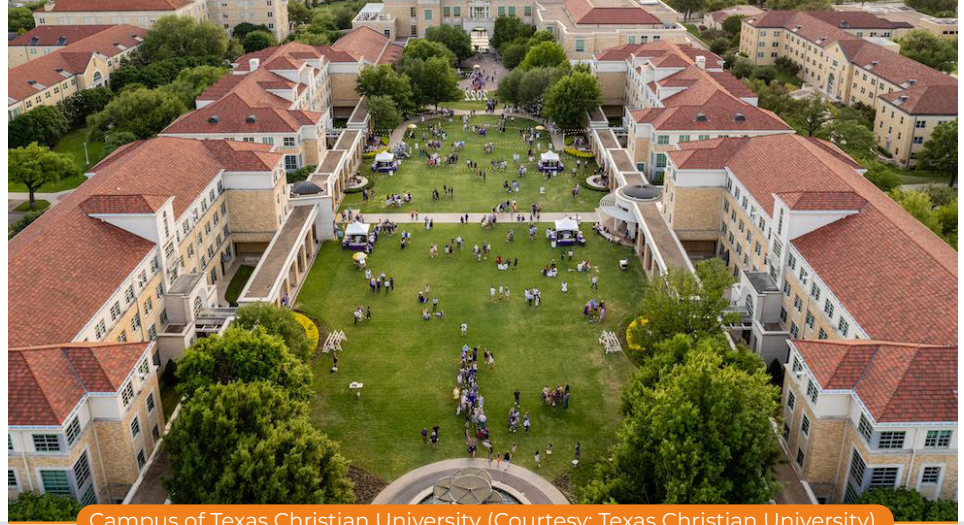
Major Entertainment Venue & Stadium Capacities

Arlington	AT&T Stadium	80,000-105,000	Sporting Events, Concerts
	Choctaw Stadium	48,000	Sporting Events
	Globe Life Field	40,300	Sporting Events, Concerts
Dallas	Cotton Bowl Stadium	92,100	Sporting Events
	American Airlines Center	20,000	Sporting Events, Concerts
	Dos Equis Pavilion	20,000	Concerts
Denton	DATCU Stadium	30,850	Sporting Events
Fort Worth	Texas Motor Speedway	154,861	NASCAR and IndyCar Races
	TCU Amon G. Carter Stadium	47,000	Sporting Events
	Dickies Arena	14,000	Sporting Events, Concerts, Fort Worth Stock Show
Grand Prairie	Lone Star Park	6,000	Horse Races
Irving	Toyota Music Factory	8,000	Concerts
University Park	SMU Gerald J. Ford Stadium	32,000	Sporting Events

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World Class Destinations (Cont.)

The projected regional population explosion will spur additional development, drawing in more tourists—and students. Many graduates of the region’s higher education institutions will remain here, further contributing to the economy and impacting the transportation network.



Campus of Texas Christian University (Courtesy: Texas Christian University)

Major Higher Education Institution Enrollments

Arlington	University of Texas at Arlington	41,000
Dallas	Dallas College	125,000
	University of Texas at Dallas	30,855
	Dallas Baptist University	4,201
Denton	University of North Texas	46,940
	Texas Women’s University	15,664
Fort Worth	Tarrant County College	43,223
	Texas Christian University	12,800
	Texas Wesleyan University	2,666
University Park	Southern Methodist University	11,444



University of Texas at Arlington students (Courtesy: University of Texas at Arlington)

Safety of High-Speed Rail

Dallas and Tarrant counties already account for one-third of all statewide crashes, a number expected to increase as the region quickly comprises a larger share of the state's population. Despite improvements in vehicle and roadway safety, there has not been a fatality-free day on Texas roadways since November 7, 2000.

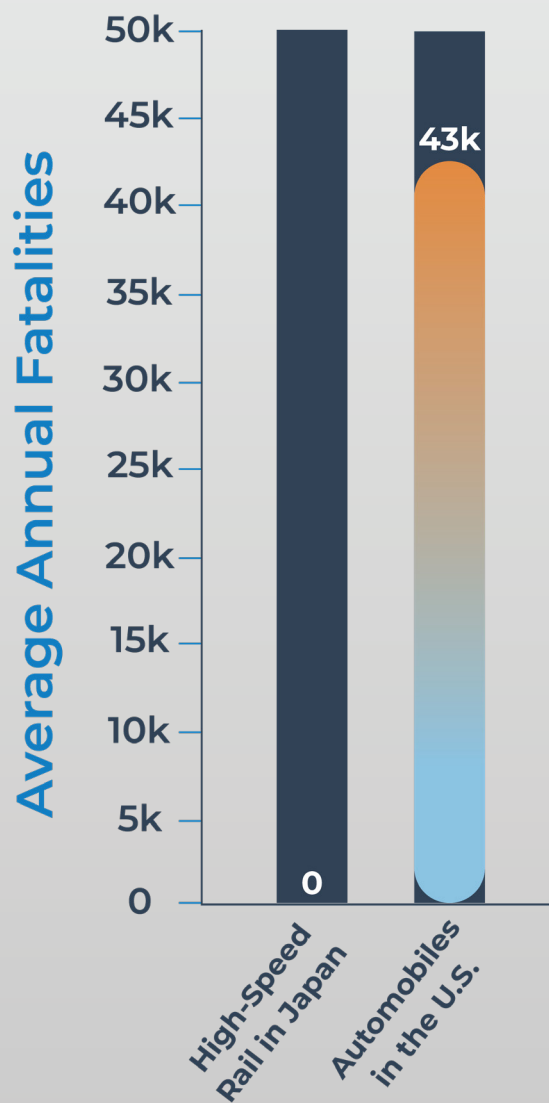
In 2023, 250,335 people were injured and 4,283 were killed on Texas roadways. **The 16-county Dallas-Fort Worth metro area experienced 128,049 total reportable crashes, of which 22,611 resulted in injury and 830 in fatality.**

High-speed rail, by contrast, has an exceptional safety record. Since first opening in 1964, Japanese high-speed rail has never had a fatality. France has also never had a fatality in its entire 30 years of service, and China, which has the world's largest high-speed rail network, has gone over a decade without a fatality.

By comparison, approximately 43,000 people are killed annually in car crashes in the U.S. alone.

Unlike automobiles, which are highly susceptible to increased crash rates during inclement weather, high-speed rail is consistently safe, rain or shine. In fact, high-speed rail is the optimal travel mode for extreme conditions, such as ice storms in North Texas or hurricane evacuations in Houston.

"Dallas-Fort Worth is experiencing unprecedented growth, which is wonderful for our economy but will increase traffic congestion," says Morris, P.E., North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Transportation Director. "To prepare ourselves for the future and ensure the region remains a top destination to live, work, and visit, high-speed rail is an important component to providing safe and reliable mobility options."



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Environmental Studies Progressing

The study's environmental team has identified natural, cultural, and community resources along the high-speed rail corridor. Specialists are now evaluating the potential impacts and benefits of constructing and operating the project.

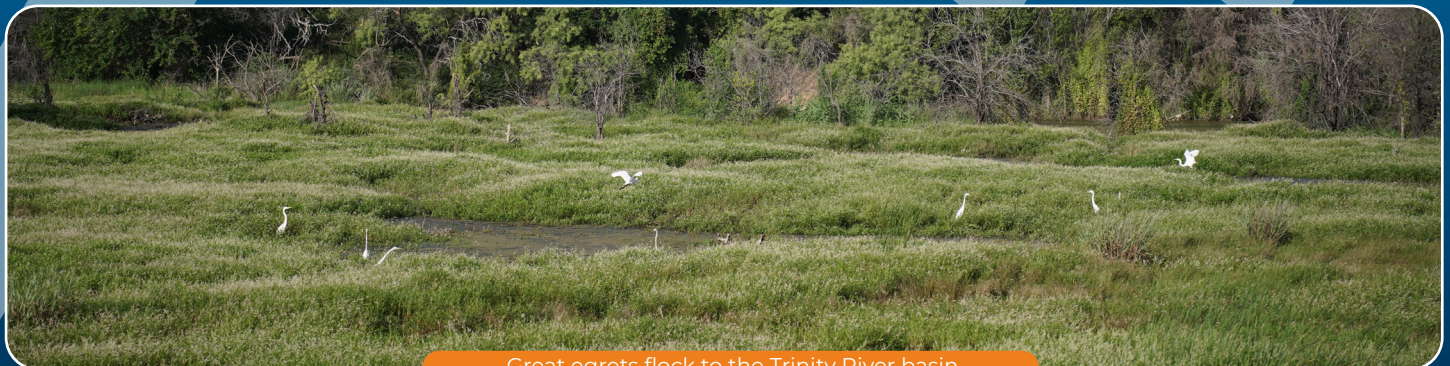
As part of the evaluation, the team continues coordination with agencies and the public to avoid and minimize impacts to the surrounding environment. High-speed rail can help create sustainable, clean, and cohesive communities.



Environmental specialists work near downtown Dallas



Environmental specialists work along the Trinity River



Great egrets flock to the Trinity River basin

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Public Input Helps Shape Future of High-Speed Rail in DFW

Public engagement is at the core of the Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Rail Study. Phase One of the project concluded in October 2021, and the team has facilitated over 300 outreach meetings to date. The engineering team evaluated six high-speed technologies, ultimately recommending high-speed rail. 43 primary alignments were studied, with the I-30 alignment now the focus of engineering and environmental studies.

“Public input is much more than checking a procedural box—it provides the planning team actionable feedback to improve the project,” said Michael Morris, P.E., North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Transportation Director. “Our successes to date are attributable to a great degree to our commitment to collaboration and an open and transparent public engagement process.”

“West Dallas folks are very much in favor of the high-speed rail because they see the economic value, but also the connectivity across the river for both sides. They see the win-win,” said Omar Narvaez, District 6 Dallas City Council Member, at a Dallas Transportation & Infrastructure Committee meeting on January 16, 2024. “Thank you to the NCTCOG and to staff for doing a lot of really, really great outreach to the community, not just through me, but through your own selves, connecting with those folks.”

See *Public Input*, pg. 9



Dallas City Council Member Omar Narvaez (second from right) at Vecinos Unidos' Benito Juarez Celebration in West Dallas on March 23

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Public Input (Cont.)

“Engaging with community members is crucial to any project’s success,” says Brendon Wheeler P.E., CFM, NCTCOG. “Community groups bring passion and deep knowledge about their local areas, making their feedback vital. Understanding what the local community wants—and doesn’t want—is among our highest priorities.”

In the past five months, project team members have met with a wide variety of local community groups and organizations.

Arlington: Arlington Conservation Council • East Arlington Renewal • Greater Arlington Chamber of Commerce • University of Texas at Arlington

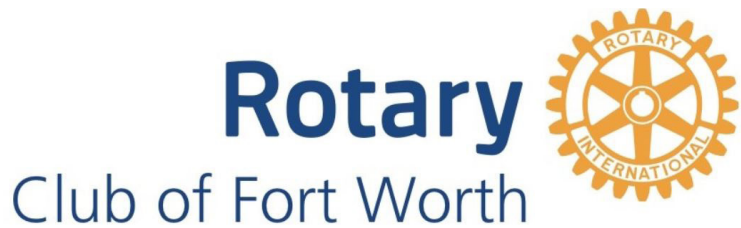
Dallas: Greater Dallas Planning Council • Ledbetter Neighborhood Association • North Dallas Chamber of Commerce • Oak Cliff Earth Day • Vecinos Unidos

Fort Worth: Handley Neighborhood Association • Rotary Club of Fort Worth • UNT Health Science Center • White Lake Hills Neighborhood Association

Additional meetings with HOAs, Rotary clubs, professional groups, and other organizations are scheduled throughout the rest of the year.



Brendon Wheeler at the Rotary Club of Fort Worth on July 12



NCTCOG representatives talk to attendees at Fort Worth Cowtown Cleanup and Earth Party on March 23



"The Handley Neighborhood Association truly appreciates the Council of Governments' efforts to keep us informed about the Dallas-Fort Worth high-speed rail project. We know this is a long-term endeavor, and it's fantastic to see them seeking community input and involvement. We eagerly look forward to the next update!"

-Angela Goodwin, Vice President of the Handley Neighborhood Association in East Fort Worth



GREATER DALLAS PLANNING COUNCIL

Anyone wanting a high-speed rail team member to present to their community group is invited to submit a speaker request form at www.nctcog.org/speakers.



Brendon Wheeler and Ian Bryant present to the Greater Dallas Planning Council on June 20

Michael Morris, P.E., NCTCOG Transportation Director, presents to the Greater Arlington Chamber on April 18



"Whether large or small, if your community group has an interest in high-speed rail, we want your input," says Rebekah Gongora, NCTCOG Program Manager. "Every voice matters, and together, we create a vision greater than the sum of its parts."

"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."

-Arlington Mayor Jim Ross in an opinion article published in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram May 16, 2024.



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Share Your Thoughts on Sept. 9

An upcoming NCTCOG transportation meeting will offer extended time for high-speed rail community input.

“So many people are buzzing with excitement about this transformational project, and some may still have unanswered questions,” says Ian Bryant, AICP, HNTB Project Manager. “This public meeting is another opportunity to grab the mic and share your thoughts. Don't miss out—we are eager to hear from you!”

The meeting is Monday, September 9 at 12 p.m. Attendees can join virtually or come in-person to the NCTCOG main offices (Centerpoint II, 616 Six Flags Dr, Arlington, TX 76011). Meeting materials and video livestream can be found at www.publicinput.com/nctcogSept24. A video recording will be available after the meeting.

For questions, please contact Rebekah Gongora, NCTCOG Program Manager, at rgongora@nctcog.org.



Rebekah Gongora, NCTCOG Program Manager (center), and other NCTCOG representatives at Ledbetter Neighborhood Association on April 2



NCTCOG main offices at Centerpoint II (Courtesy: Community Impact)

Let Your Voices Be Heard

“The coming months will be filled with team members connecting with stakeholders at community events, festivals, homeowners' association and neighborhood association meetings, business organizations such as chambers of commerce, and more,” said Rebekah Gongora, NCTCOG Program Manager.

Visit www.nctcog.org/dfw-hstcs to leave your feedback or request a speaker for your organization today.

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We Want Your Input.

www.nctcog.org