

LOCAL MOTION

OCTOBER 2024

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

NCTCOG WINS \$5M GRANT TO HELP SCHOOLS WITH CROSSING GUARDS



The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) was recently awarded a \$5 million Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant for the Crossing Students Safely in the Dallas-Fort Worth Region (CroSS-DFW) project, aimed at supporting school transportation safety and crossing guard establishment.

In 2022, NCTCOG received a request to assist with the crossing guard establishment process, citing the lack of state and federal guidance and the high rates of traffic accidents around schools. Since then, NCTCOG has met with stakeholders, gathered information about various city crossing guard processes and conducted research about crossing guard best practices.

NCTCOG applied for the SS4A grant in 2024 to fund planning efforts to support regional school transportation safety and crossing guard establishment. Through this funding award, NCTCOG plans to study current conditions and challenges, create safety recommendations and a regional crossing guard model, and conduct a demonstration of driver awareness technology in school zones.

These efforts will build on the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan and the Roadway Safety Plan, which were developed to inform transportation safety improvements throughout the region. The goals of CroSS-DFW are to improve crossing guard planning, reduce gaps in crossing guard coverage and minimize driver errors in school zones.

PROGRAM ENCOURAGES DRIVERS TO SHIFT COMMUTES OUTSIDE PEAK



A new program that could improve the reliability of roadways through the use of technology is being tested on Interstate Highway 35W. The program, called Miles Matter, seeks to initially engage approximately 500 people who travel along the corridor regularly by offering them incentives to drive outside the normal peak traffic periods. This voluntary program launched in September.

In partnership with NCTCOG, the Texas A&M Transportation Institute and Carma Technologies, the Texas Department of Transportation received funding to assess the feasibility of using smartphone technology to understand travel patterns and behaviors on Dallas-Fort Worth roadways. Participants will use the GoCarma app, used by drivers since 2020 to qualify for peak-period discounts on the region's TEXpress lanes. Personalized incentives will be awarded for people who choose to carpool and avoid the peak periods as well as congestion. No additional roadway infrastructure is required. The points earned by participants can be exchanged for gift cards. The GoCarma app can be downloaded from the App Store or Google Play. The corridors are geofenced, so data is only collected in the corridors during the peak travel periods, when the incentives are active.

Additional phases of the project will be implemented based on initial feedback and engagement.

ENGINE OFF NORTH TEXAS HELPS REGION IDLE LESS, CUT EMISSIONS



Engine Off North Texas (EONT) is an initiative serving the 10-county Dallas-Fort Worth nonattainment area to educate and equip local governments, commercial transport stakeholders and the public with effective approaches to reduce excessive idling from commercial heavy-duty vehicles.

With approximately 48% of nitrogen oxides from all mobile emissions sources originating from heavy-duty vehicles, this program provides resources and local government guidance focused on reducing idling activity known to be harmful to air quality and public health. For local governments, this initiative works directly with the region's municipalities to encourage adopting and implementing ordinances that set a five-minute heavy-duty commercial vehicle (30 minutes for buses) limit on engine idling and inform them of enforcement options. For drivers and the public, EONT provides brochures to highlight anti-idling ordinances, the negative effects of idling, ways to curb idling and options for reporting an idling vehicle.

Currently, 29 municipalities in the region have ordinances in place, with many of them subjecting heavy-duty vehicle violators to a penalty of up to \$500 for each excessive idling occurrence. NCTCOG is seeking to add to the number of participating local governments and is available to provide educational resources and idle restriction signs upon request.

To report an idling violation from a heavy-duty vehicle, residents can complete an online form at [this link](#) or call 877-NTX-IDLE (877-689-4353). The 10-county nonattainment area consists of

Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant and Wise counties. For more information about EONT, visit our website [here](#).

OCTOBER IS FALL CAR CARE MONTH



Are you Car Care Aware? October is Fall National Car Care Awareness Month and that means taking a few extra steps to ensure your vehicle is in good working condition for the seasons ahead. Not only could preventative maintenance save you both time and money, but it could also keep the air we breathe clean and yourself and passengers safe on the roadway. Vehicle preventative maintenance includes making sure your check engine light is not illuminated, tires are inflated properly and have plenty of tread depth left, windshield wipers aren't cracked or torn, and your fluids are all topped off. Discovering that your vehicle wasn't prepared for the fall weather can be dangerous, so plan ahead.

As fall quickly gives way to colder winter temperatures, ensuring that your heating system is up to the task is important, as well. A malfunctioning heater could not only leave you uncomfortable but also pose safety risks. Luckily, a vehicle will generally give you warning before disaster strikes, so keep an eye on the coolant level as well as the temperature gauge. Additionally, as it gets darker earlier, ensuring that your headlights and brake lights are functioning correctly is even more important.

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

NCTCOG TO HOST HYBRID PUBLIC MEETING OCT. 15



NCTCOG is seeking input on infrastructure funding recommendations, parking management and other transportation planning initiatives during an upcoming public meeting at noon Tuesday, October 15. The session will be held at NCTCOG's Arlington offices, located at 616 Six Flags Drive. Those unable to attend in person can watch the meeting live online at PublicInput.com/nctcogOct24. Participants can also join the discussion by calling 855-925-2801 and entering code 10502. Public comments will be accepted until Wednesday, November 13.

An overview of the Blue-Green-Grey Call for Projects will be presented. This program supports innovative projects that integrate water management, environmental considerations and transportation infrastructure. The presentation will cover funding recommendations and outline the next steps for the program. NCTCOG staff will provide an overview of the Regional Parking Management Toolbox and Database, an initiative aimed at helping North Texas cities manage parking more effectively and promote sustainable land use. The toolbox offers resources and best practices for local governments, and the presentation will detail how these materials can be used and how the region can engage with this effort.

NCTCOG collected an inventory of traffic signal equipment for the region's approximately 7,000 traffic signals. As part of this effort, staff worked with partner agencies to develop a minimum standard for all traffic signal equipment. The Regional Transportation Council set aside funding to begin updating equipment that does not meet this standard. Due to limited funding, not all necessary equipment upgrades can be completed. NCTCOG will present a strategic process based on this inventory to select locations for equipment upgrades. Information on updates to the Mobility 2045 - 2022 Plan, interactive public input tools like "Map Your Experience," as well as details about the Try Parking It program and the Business Engagement Program will also be available online for review and comment.

Residents planning to use transit to attend the meeting can take advantage of \$6 roundtrip rides from the CentrePort/DFW Airport Station to NCTCOG via the Arlington Transportation app. To download the app, go to arlingtontx.gov/ondemand. For special accommodations related to disabilities or language interpretation, please contact 817-695-9255 or email jcastillo@nctcog.org.

REMINDER:

FORT WORTH MALL TO HOST EV EXTRAVAGANZA



Electric vehicle enthusiasts and those thinking about purchasing one are encouraged to stop by Fort Worth's Tanger Outlets between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. for Dallas-Fort Worth's annual National Drive Electric Week celebration. Stop by the shopping center (15853 North Freeway, Fort Worth) to talk with EV owners or experience what it feels like to ride in an EV. The event will also feature several activities, such as kid-friendly games and scavenger hunts, and the opportunity to win prizes through participating in these activities. For more, visit the [website](#).

For more information about topics, contact Brian Wilson at 817-704-2511 or bwilson@nctcog.org. Visit www.nctcog.org/trans for more information on the department.

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