

MINUTES

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL PUBLIC MEETING

Dallas-Fort Worth Air Quality Improvement Plan Update

Rail Crossing Improvement Program

Fiscal Year 2020-2024 Annual Project Listings

Meeting Date and Location

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) held a hybrid public meeting on Monday, Oct. 13, 2025, at noon in Arlington. Patrons could attend in person, via phone or view the live stream at www.publicinput.com/nctcogOct25. Dan Lamers, Senior Program Manager, moderated the meeting attended by 62 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 updated on Oct. 9, 2025. Staff presented information about:

- Dallas-Fort Worth Air Quality Improvement Plan Update – **presented by Irlenia Hermosillo**
- Rail Crossing Improvement Program – **presented by Elijah Cook**

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/nctcogOct25.

Summary of Presentations

Dallas-Fort Worth Air Quality Improvement Plan Update presentation:

<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/24cc10f2-49fe-4c26-a037-f3802ed31b38/DFW-AQIP-Update.pdf>

The Dallas-Fort Worth Air Quality Improvement Plan, developed under the EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program, includes two main deliverables: a completed Priority Action Plan and a forthcoming Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP). The CAP is a 25-year

plan that includes emissions projections through 2050 and sets long-term reduction goals. The plan also addresses the region's nonattainment status for ground-level ozone and the expected population and economic growth that may worsen air quality. Criteria pollutants, particularly ozone and particulate matter, remain a concern for public health and the environment.

Regional projections show carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions increasing by 123 percent from 2022 to 2050, driven by growth in the energy and transportation sectors. Transportation-related emissions alone are expected to rise by 55 percent during this period. The regional target aims to reduce NO_x, CO₂e and related pollutants by 25 percent by 2050.

Key transportation strategies under evaluation include:

- **Vehicle and Equipment Upgrades:** Transitioning to renewable and alternative fuels and improving emission standards compliance.
- **System Operations Improvements:** Enhancing infrastructure efficiency through optimized traffic signal timing and reduced delays.
- **Mode Shifts:** Promoting public transit, biking and other alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle use.

Public feedback is being collected through the DFW Air Quality Improvement Plan website at www.PublicInput.com/dfwaqip. A virtual public meeting will be held on November 12, and the final Comprehensive Action Plan will be available for review in December.

Rail Crossing Improvement Program presentation:

<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/fe37cd04-331b-4b04-82fe-69e2e5ff3b94/Rail-Crossing-Improvement-Program.pdf>

The Rail Crossing Improvement Program was approved by the Regional Transportation Council in February 2024. Its goal is to enhance safety and quality of life near at-grade rail crossings across North Texas by identifying and implementing low-cost safety and repair solutions. The program works in partnership with cities, counties, the Texas Department of Transportation and rail operators.

Staff evaluated hundreds of crossings across the region using both quantitative and qualitative criteria. Data from the Federal Railroad Administration included vehicle and train volumes, train speeds and incident history over the past 10 years. Field visits were also conducted to assess warning devices, signage, pavement markings, visibility and overall crossing conditions. The program does not fund high-cost improvements such as grade separations or intersection reconfigurations.

Two project corridors were selected based on this analysis as well as stakeholder input:

- **Southeast Fort Worth Corridor:** Includes eight crossings from Ellis Street to Jessamine Street. The corridor was chosen due to high traffic volumes and multiple

incidents over the past decade. Improvements will supplement existing city projects at Kellis, Bolt, Dickson, Biddison and Bewick streets, provide new safety enhancements at Morningside and Jessamine streets and fully fund the closure of Page Avenue. Fort Worth will receive \$3.1 million with a 20 percent local match.

- **West Dallas Corridor:** Includes three crossings at Vilbig Road, East Jefferson Street and Manila Road. Selected for similar safety concerns and geometry issues, this project will fund the closure of Vilbig Road and safety upgrades at East Jefferson Street and Manila Road. Dallas will receive \$6.9 million with a 20 percent local match.

The Rail Crossing Improvement Program continues to prioritize projects that deliver measurable safety benefits through low-cost, high-impact solutions across the region.

Summary of Online Review and Comment Topics

Fiscal Year 2020-2024 Annual Project Listings link:

<https://www.nctcog.org/trans/funds/tip/annual-project-listings>

Annual project listings outline federal funds obligated for projects within the Dallas-Fort Worth region for each fiscal year. The reports are submitted to the Texas Department of Transportation annually and are then sent to the Federal Highway Administration .

Project listings for fiscal years 2020-2024 are available for public review at: [NCTCOG - Annual Project Listings](#).

COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE MEETING

Dallas-Fort Worth Air Quality Improvement Plan Update

Gary Hennessey, Citizen

A. Pollution management

Comment: I see your AQIP projections and targets include all the possible sources of CO₂e. Y'all are doing a great job, but I'd also like to remind you that pollution controls will work off of the compound interest program. If you make improvements to pollution controls and pollution evaluation in five to ten years, somebody else is going to come up with some other way to look at it and find an even better way to manage pollution controls. If we fail to implement our pollution controls this year, in five years they're going to be trying to implement exactly what we have now, or they may not do anything because they don't see the value in investing in the future. We need to find a way to get them implemented. Part of that is evaluating the actual pollution point source, whether it be a dry cleaner or a fracking site. I don't know if we have any way to officially evaluate sites right now, but the RTC and NCTCOG staff said they were not recommending any enhanced requirements to the dry cleaners to improve their pollution controls, and that

enhancing transportation pollution controls would take care of the problem. If you don't take care of all the problems, it just shifts the problem from one place to another.

The latest study indicates that the average vehicle on the road is 12 years old. 12-year-old vehicles don't have the latest, greatest pollution controls. The car manufacturers put in the latest, greatest pollution controls on every brand-new vehicle, but if we don't take the old cars off the road, or continue to require fracking sites, dry cleaners or the General Motors plant to control their pollution, then it's going to cost more for the latest and greatest vehicles, and people will have to keep their old vehicles longer. I call that the compound interest program. It works great when you're putting money in the bank and your investments, but if we don't have compound investments in pollution controls, we're never going to get to a point where we actually reduce pollution.

I want to commend the RTC for coming up with the money for the Texas portion of Amtrak between Oklahoma City and Fort Worth. I'd also like to see added efficiency in traffic light management. I know they're trying to do it, but there was suddenly an enormous amount of money available for traffic light management when they sent out the red-light camera tickets—except all the money went to the traffic light providers. I would like to see some way that we could continue to enhance traffic light efficiency and not have to depend on tickets to get the funds. The traffic light improvements are what matter to me most because there is no other transportation available to me. I live in Arlington. We don't have a bus system. We have the Trinity Metro service, which I use when I can. But mostly I just drive, and sitting at a traffic light waiting on the traffic light to change because there are no actual vehicles in the intersection is really annoying. I'd like to see the red-light cameras turn around and be green light cameras, if it's possible. Now, of course, that won't work at rush hour, but it can work on the off hours when I drive.

The dry cleaners, the fracking sites and the construction are not integrated with you all, and you're not integrated with them. That is something I would like to see the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality or the government work on. Doing what you can is great, but there's more that could be done by combining these.

Summary of response by Savana Nance: The projections you mentioned show all of the sectors and their growth. We do our best to estimate some of those policies mentioned in a snapshot in time. For example, the growth you see in the energy sector takes today's renewable energy adoption in Texas and assumes that stays the same. It is similar to an "if we don't do anything" scenario. If we see all this economic and population growth coming to our region, this is what our emissions are going to look like. And then the second half of that presentation is our proposed strategies and implementation.

Additionally, you talked about the importance of addressing all of the sectors. I'm not familiar with the dry cleaners not being addressed, so I'll have to look into that. We are working with our Environment and Development Department to develop targets and measures for the materials management sector, energy sector and fugitive emissions.

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: Regarding all of the sectors, we are responsible for the transportation component of it. We work closely with our Environment and Development Department, but we also work hand in hand with TCEQ to identify what transportation's responsibility is toward the whole picture. So, we are not responsible for any of those other items. I completely agree with your point about transportation not being able to fully shoulder the burden. Transportation has had tremendous improvements in technology when it comes to vehicles. That has been a primary reduction strategy over the years. Everybody says, "we never know when we're at the end of our technology road," but our cars today are much cleaner than the cars built a few years ago. We are going to start seeing diminishing returns in improvements from vehicles over the years because the vehicles are already so clean that it's going to be very hard to get them even cleaner, while the other sectors generally have not made as much progress on the technological side. So, your point is an extremely important one, and we'll keep up the good fight to do what we can. It's also not necessarily a local issue. Even if we do everything we want, other parts of the State may not be doing everything they need to, which still creates problems. It is a statewide issue, not just a local one.

Regarding your point about removing cars from roads, we used to run a vehicle repair and replacement program for older vehicles. If there was a serious emissions problem, we used to be able to provide funding to get vehicles fixed so they would meet emissions standards. We would also pay for people to trade in their vehicles and get credit toward the purchase of a vehicle that did meet standards. Unfortunately, the program was stopped by the legislature a few years back, so we don't have that tool in our toolbox any longer and must double down on the utilization of other tools.

You also mentioned traffic lights. It's hard starts from a traffic light that really cause a lot of emissions – the precursors out of your tailpipe. Making traffic flow smoother on our arterial streets through better coordination of our traffic signals can have a big impact on our air quality. One of the primary sources of funding we have for that is the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program, which is allocated to the State. We were recently notified that the State is likely going to reduce our share of that funding over the next few years. As a result, we're going to have to be very proactive now, so we're not trying to play catch-up in the future .

Rail Crossing Improvement Program

Don Stilley, Citizen

A. Arlington rail crossing improvements

Comment: I live north of IH 30 in Arlington, but I often travel south to my retail sector. Is there any plan to improve the crossings? You talked about crossings in the east and the west, but my city seems to be missing. Any plans to go over or under the railroad at Cooper or Collins?

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: There are no definitive plans at the moment. The rail line that runs through Arlington is one of Union Pacific's national main lines. It is an extremely busy line, and there's not a lot that can be done to deal with the train. On the non-railroad side, you have the City of Arlington. Over the years, we have worked with the city to evaluate different configurations for separating various crossings through downtown Arlington. Unfortunately, we haven't been able to identify anything that would work. It would be extremely cost prohibitive, and it would have dramatic impacts on land use around those rail lines in those streets. For example, for a lot of those businesses that are built right up next to the railroad, Collins Street is their only entrance and exit. If you grade separated it, you will lose access to the land use. That's a very expensive proposition for the city to undertake as well. We continue to work with the City of Arlington on the safety aspects of the existing crossings. In fact, we're working with the city right now on some safety improvements on the Mesquite Street crossing to help make that safer for pedestrians and vehicles.

Unfortunately, funding is a large issue with these grade separations. Now with that said, there will be some funding available soon through the legislature's Railroad Crossing Elimination Program. We are constantly looking for opportunities to fund railroad grade crossings because they are very expensive. But safety is critical, and we'll look for any opportunity to be able to eliminate train, vehicle and pedestrian interactions.

Phyllis Silver, Citizen

A. Terminology clarification

Comment: Regarding the rail crossing, it sounded like Elijah said, "geometry issues." I don't know what that refers to.

Summary of response by Elijah Cook: Whenever you cross a railroad it can be extremely bumpy because it is not in line with the road. It can also be a safety concern if cars slow down whenever approaching or crossing the tracks. The rail crossings won't intersect the roadway itself at 90 degrees. If it's at a very awkward angle, it might make it more difficult for people in cars to see the train coming down the line.

Other

Carol Stilley, Citizen

A. Electric vehicles initiatives at the city level

Comment: Is there any way we could have the cities lead the way? Can we ask them for all their vehicles to be EV and have stations placed everywhere? Realizing it's not going to be the mass quantity that we need, at least it would show that there's an interest. Could all new hotels have things like that included?

Summary of response by Savana Nance: That's part of our intention with the development of the Air Quality Improvement Plan — to identify strategies where cities can pick and choose what's relevant and appropriate for them to implement. The Council of Governments has a Clean Fleet Policy cities can adopt. The City of Arlington has been testing some electric vehicles. It also always helps to have citizens encourage cities, so make sure your voice is heard. I do believe the City of Arlington is a Clean Fleet Policy adoptee, which means they've adopted the RTC resolution to have the lowest possible fleet emissions.

To your point about charging stations, we have a call for projects open right now for cities to apply for funding to install charging stations on their property. I can follow up and share more information about that if you'd like. I suspect Arlington is aware of it, since we've been bringing a lot of information about this to our committees. If you have input, it's always helpful for cities to know that the work they're doing is supported. You should definitely encourage them to submit because that funding opportunity closes at the end of this month. If they don't apply soon, they could miss out.

Regarding hotels, that gets more into a code issue. There are "EV-ready" codes that require a certain number of new buildings to be capable of supporting EV charging. That's one thing cities can do at the local level — adopt those updated codes. That's not something the Council of Governments controls.

Phyllis Silver, Citizen

A. EPA standards

Comment: I was initially very concerned about NCTCOG lowering its standards. I seem to be reassured that everything is going to be on track, but now I'm increasingly concerned about the EPA, with all the layoffs taking place. I'm also concerned about the ideas from some individuals that climate change is not important. I'm increasingly worried about whether we'll see lowering of the EPA standards.

Now, my comment relates to leaf blowers. We don't hear anything about them. I mostly walk to the transit station. Whenever I get to my destination, I tell people every day is "Leaf Blower Day" in Addison. I don't know the mechanics, but I think they're filled with propane or something like that, plus all the dust. I don't know if anybody is taking that into consideration, but there's got to be another way.

Summary of response by Savana Nance: We received funding for the Dallas-Fort Worth Air Quality Improvement Plan in 2023. It was awarded during the previous administration, and the grant focuses on reducing CO₂e — carbon dioxide equivalent — which is what you're referring to when you talk about climate change.

We've committed to participating in the grant because it allows us to address local air quality issues, particularly our nonattainment areas for the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. When you hear us talk about NO_x, particulate matter and ground-level ozone — those are the pollutants that impact us locally. They're the reason our skies in Texas sometimes aren't as blue and bright as they should be. If you've ever seen ozone alerts on the highway, those are the major concerns. Those pollutants not only have health implications, but they can also have future economic impacts .

Ground-level ozone has been a major focus for us since those standards were first implemented — and we've never actually achieved attainment with them. This plan is comprehensive. We're looking at reducing NO_x and particulate matter — which are the key air quality standards — as well as CO₂e, which we're required to address under the grant. While CO₂e reductions are part of our scope, we're treating all of these pollutants comprehensively, considering what our region can do.

Right now, this is just a plan — we don't yet have funding to support implementation — but we're evaluating all pollutants and their regional impacts. We've checked with our EPA project officer several times, and they've told us to continue our work. No one has instructed us to stop, and our deadline is at the end of this year. Until we're told otherwise, we're moving forward.

Regarding the EPA potentially lowering standards — I can't say whether they will or won't. But I do want to clarify that the two pollutants we are at risk of being in nonattainment for are ground-level ozone and particulate matter. We've been in nonattainment for ground-level ozone since the standard was first introduced in the 1990s. The current ozone standard was set in 2015 — it's been in place for 10 years, and while it hasn't changed, we're still working toward attainment.

As for particulate matter, our region is still determining whether we are in nonattainment. Last year, the EPA proposed lowering the standard from 12 to 9. That proposal came toward the end of the previous administration, and the current administration is now revisiting that decision — not the standard itself, but the proposed lowering. Before that, the last update to the particulate matter standard was in 2012. I mention this to highlight that many of these standards have been in place for decades — the National Ambient Air Quality Standards were first established in the 1970s. The current standards we're trying to meet for particulate matter and ground-level ozone date back to 2012 and 2015, respectively.

And yes — I completely understand the concern about leaf blowers. They're loud, smelly, and I've seen statistics showing they can emit as much pollution as a Ford F-150, which is pretty surprising to think about.

Michael McPhail, Citizen

A. Heartland Flyer funding

Question: Will NCTCOG continue funding for the Heartland Flyer in 2026?

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: Yes, the RTC approved \$3.5 million to fund the Texas portion of the Heartland Flyer through September 2026. When the World Cup is here in North Texas, we anticipate that more people will use the Heartland Flyer, which also should help reduce whatever subsidy is needed for the next fiscal year. Unfortunately, the RTC does not fund operations for railroads or Amtrak on a long-term basis, but members felt it was critically important – especially with the World Cup coming – to keep the service running through fiscal year 2026 and then explore other options in the future.

AI Disclosure: This document was edited with the support of Artificial Intelligence.

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

Other

Mail

Phyllis Silver, Citizen

Please see Attachment 1 for comments submitted via postal mail.

October 13, 2025 NCTCOG Public Meeting
Questions & Comments

Dallas-Fort Worth Air Quality Improvement Program

Page 4 -

Questions

- What are fugitive emissions?
- In the bar graph, what is TR? example ~ 50m from TR

Page 5

Comment

I made the comment during the Q+A section of the October Public Meeting, and I would like to emphasize the topic now, in writing, the topic is leaf blowers, the repeated use of these devices, in addition to being a source of noise pollution, is creating air pollution, the dust and leaves are tossed around in the air and the propane or whatever powers the blower makes it hard to breathe in the area of the blower's use.

This would go under the topic as shown on page 5, "Reduce Emissions from Non-Road Equipment," the photo shows a lawn mower. In my neighborhood, we mainly have mid-rise apartments and not homes, so the leaf blowers are the major problem.

I realize that your department works with transportation issues, since you also deal with air quality issues as a whole, I recommend continued emphasis on these non-road equipment sources.

Rail Crossing Improvement Program

Comment - this is a worthwhile project. With the wear and tear at the at-grade rail crossings caused by the trains and automobiles, it's refreshing that an organization is monitoring the disrepair of these crossings.

Phyllis Silver
 10/27/2025

To Carli Baylor or Hannah Witcher's
Successor in the Transportation Department;

I received an informative letter dated September 10, 2025 from Ken Bunkley in response to a question that I had about an August 2025 Public Involvement item. I asked what "Precision docking technology" was. Mr. Bunkley indicated in his letter that if I have any further questions I should contact Hannah Witcher.

I am aware that Hannah is no longer with the Transportation Department and I do not have a further question, however I would like to make a favorable comment about this. I was not aware of this technology and I find it exciting that this technology exists. One of the challenges of boarding and disembarking buses is that some bus operators park far from the curbs and also the height of the step on platform is too high. I would like to see the precision docking technology become prevalent on buses. Mr. Bunkley indicated that ^{DATA} was considering updating some shuttles to provide precision docking technology - I would like to see it throughout the system.

Thank you.

Phyllis Silver
10/27/2025