

North Central Texas Council of Governments

SUMMARY

North Texas Regional Integration of Sustainability Efforts (RISE) Coalition

January 28, 2022

9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Teams Meeting

1. Welcome and Introductions.

ACTION ITEMS

2. **Meeting Summary.** Review previous meeting summary and vote on approval. The October 15, 2021 Meeting Summary can be viewed [here](#).

A motion to approve the October 15, 2021 Meeting Summary was made by Pharr Andrews, City of Dallas. The motion was seconded by Katherine Barnett, City of Dallas. There was no opposition, so the summary was approved unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

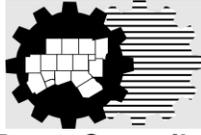
3. **FY2022 Work Program and Project Update and Discussion.** (45 minutes, Members and NCTCOG)
NCTCOG will provide an update to the group on several initiatives related to the FY2022 Work Program:
- Meadows Foundation Grant Application
 - Regional GHG Inventory & ICLEI GHG Inventory Cohort
 - ~~Update on Emissions Reduction Strategy Toolkit~~
 - Update on Regional Tree Cooperative Concept
 - Organic Waste to Fuel Feasibility Study
 - FY2022 Event Planning – Discuss regional education opportunities including potential ideas for workshops, webinars, etc.
 - Virtual Survey on Regional Sustainability
 - Workshop topic ideas: Social Equity, Urban Heat Island Mitigation

Breanne Johnson (NCTCOG) shared that the Meadows Foundation has not yet made a determination on the status of the RISE Coalition's grant application, but that the Foundation confirmed they'd be discussing the application at their January Board meeting. NCTCOG will notify Coalition members as soon as a determination is made.

Jenny Narvaez (NCTCOG) provided an update on the status of the Regional Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory. NCTCOG is continuing to gather and analyze data on energy, transportation, water, and wastewater for the region and cohort participants. There are currently twelve city participants in the GHG inventory cohort who are producing their own city-wide GHG inventory through this process.

Crysta Guzman (NCTCOG) addressed the concept of creating a regional tree purchasing cooperative, brought forth by Yarcus Lewis (City of Plano) at the October meeting. NCTCOG has been working with Purchasing staff to scope out the concept and outline next steps to making the cooperative a reality. NCTCOG will be reaching out to city staff that have expressed interest in participating in a Focus Group to determine the size, species, and quantity of trees to be listed in the purchasing agreement. The Focus Group will also assist in developing a Request for Proposals for growers to apply for a contract to provide the trees.

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Breanne Johnson (NCTCOG) described the ongoing work associated with the North Texas Organic Waste to Fuel Feasibility Study, an EPA-funded project in collaboration with the University of Texas at Arlington to determine the potential for waste-to-energy projects in the region. NCTCOG has contracted with the firm Burns & McDonnell to conduct this study and to facilitate a series of Stakeholder Workshops for relevant entities in the region to provide input on the study goals, objectives, and outcomes. More information on this study can be found [online here](#).

The group discussed plans to conduct a virtual survey on regional sustainability goals, challenges, and successes. Pharr Andrews (City of Dallas) once again expressed support for a virtual survey using the tool MURAL, an online whiteboarding application that allows users to post and discuss survey responses in real time. Meghna Tare (UTA) requested that a question be included about communities' educational needs related to sustainability, as UTA can develop programs webinars on topics of interest. Alex Pharmakis (City of Farmers Branch) suggested that a one-pager of the survey results be developed that highlights the main regional priorities and existing community initiatives on sustainability.

Breanne Johnson (NCTCOG) addressed future plans to hold workshops related to Social Equity and Urban Heat Islands. Breanne also shared the idea of creating an Equity Subcommittee as part of the RISE Coalition's focus on social equity and environmental justice. Meghna Tare (UTA) offered UTA's help in connecting to social equity researchers, and Sangita Rana (TRWD) volunteered to join the Equity Subcommittee. Alex Pharmakis (City of Farmers Branch) expressed support for the Urban Heat Islands webinar, and Michelle Wood-Ramirez (TRWD) suggested a potential subject matter expert to speak.

- 4. Coalition Member Recruitment Strategy.** (5 minutes, Members and NCTCOG) A major goal of the Coalition is to grow the membership over the next year. NCTCOG Staff will give a brief update on recruitment activities since the last meeting as well as any upcoming recruitment and funding opportunities. The Members will discuss a recruitment strategy. Staff will provide an update on the FY2022 Call for Members and current membership commitments.

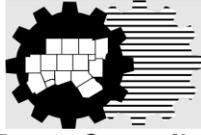
Pharr Andrews (City of Dallas) and Katherine Barnett (City of Denton) gave an update on the Recruitment Subcommittee's progress in contacting potential new members. The Subcommittee members have reached out to a few nonmember communities with mixed results, and have set a goal of increasing RISE Coalition membership by 25% annually. Katherine requested that NCTCOG share a list of nonmember communities that have had staff participate in RISE meetings in the past, but have not yet joined the Coalition as cost-sharing members.

- 5. RISE Member Presentation.** (15 minutes, Mendie White, City of Lewisville) In April of 2021, the City of Lewisville adopted an update to their Comprehensive Plan "Lewisville 2025" which was originally adopted in 2014. The Plan establishes specific steps to take and sets targets to reach for eight important aspects of sustainability. Mendie White will talk about steps taken since the initial adoption of the plan as well as updates to the sustainability section of the plan.

Mendie White presented on the City of Lewisville's "Lewisville 2025" comprehensive plan addressing the City's sustainability goals and initiatives. The Plan represents a cross-department effort and utilizes STAR benchmarking. A gap analysis was conducted using STAR Communities to determine City needs and priorities. A draft update to the sustainability section of the comprehensive plan was shared.

- 6. Featured Sustainability Presentation.** (15 minutes, Meghna Tare, UTA) The North Texas Food Policy Alliance is a regional collaboration to develop sustainable and equitable food systems in North Texas. Meghna Tare, Chief Sustainability Officer for the University of Texas – Arlington (UTA), will share the Alliance's ongoing initiatives and outreach to food system stakeholders throughout the region.

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Meghna Tare (UTA) presented on the ongoing work of the North Texas Food Policy Alliance, including research and initiatives related to several UN Sustainable Development Goals. The NTFPA has several subcommittees made up of researchers, students, and community and nonprofit representatives who are interested in advancing food access, equity, and sustainability in the region.

INFORMATION ITEMS

7. **NCTCOG Regional Opportunities.** (10 minutes, NCTCOG Staff) NCTCOG will go over other opportunities in the North Central Texas region that relate to sustainability and the Coalition's focus areas.

Several key items were briefly covered by NCTCOG staff.

- PACE – NCTCOG is moving forward with a regional PACE program and is currently working internally to brief NCTCOG's Board and put the pieces in place to issue a Request of Proposals for a 3rd party contractor. NCTCOG will share more concrete information on this in the next few months.
- Local Government Energy Reporting – Reports will be due Feb. 1, 2022 for period of January through December 2021. Contact Dorothy Gilliam, dgilliam@nctcog.org with any questions.
- Regional Codes Coordinating Committee – NCTCOG has posted the International Building Code and International Energy Code Regional Amendments to the NCTCOG website.
- Various Funding Opportunities were shared with direct links to the opportunities.
- Various Upcoming Meetings of importance were shared with links to register.

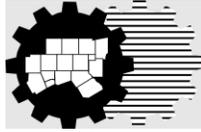
OTHER BUSINESS

8. **Participant Roundtable** (25 minutes, All) Coalition member governments will be asked to briefly share what is happening in their communities. As time allows, participants will have an opportunity to share activities happening in their communities/organizations. This roundtable serves as an opportunity to identify areas for collaboration and sharing sustainability programs or success stories.

Participants were asked to answer the questions: What is your community doing to promote sustainable food systems? What challenges have you faced related to food systems?

- Dallas: Pharr shared the City of Dallas is working on a sustainable food systems plan. She also announced that Carlos Evans is the new City of Dallas Director of Environmental Quality and Sustainability. Katy Evans is no longer overseeing the City's CECAP development.
- Denton: Katherine shared that the City of Denton is promoting urban agriculture in the City and now has a community market.
- Lewisville: Mendie shared that the City of Lewisville is working with an organization called Veterans Produce to grow fresh produce and distribute it to veterans. The City is also partnering with Tx Health and LISD to utilize hydroponic greenhouses and gardens at the LISD middle school to address food insecurity among students.
- Plano: Yarcus and Jaime Bretzmann shared that the City of Plano has a residential food scrap and composting program, and has purchases a depackager for commercial recycling.
- Fort Worth: Ben Neal shared that the City of Fort Worth has a residential composting program, and that they have greatly reduced the contamination rate of the organic material collected by the program.
- Farmers Branch: Alex Pharmakis shared that the City of Farmers Branch has several community gardens growing fresh produce for residents, and that the City has partners with Metrocrest Services on a residential food scrap drop-off program. He also shared that the City's first Sustainability Plan will be going to the Council next Tuesday.

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- Tarrant Regional Water District: Michelle Wood-Ramirez shared that TRWD is working on a sustainability plan, and that they have a particular focus on ecosystem landscape management.

9. **Future Agenda Items.** Suggestions for future agenda items.

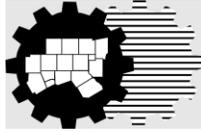
10. **Next Meeting Date.** The next meeting is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on Friday, April 22, 2022.

The group discussed moving the next meeting to Friday, April 29th to avoid conflicting with Earth Day events on the 22nd. A determination was not made, but NCTCOG will notify RISE Coalition members if the next meeting date changes.

11. **Adjournment.**

If you have any questions regarding the meeting or agenda items, please contact Breanne Johnson at (817) 695-9148 or bjohnson@nctcog.org.

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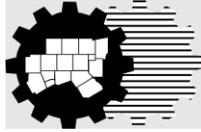
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Meeting Participants

Meeting attendance was recorded via Microsoft Teams.

Official RISE Members	
Pharr Andrews	City of Dallas
Katherine Barnett	City of Denton
Yarcus Lewis	City of Plano
Sangita Rana	Tarrant Regional Water District
Mendie White	City of Lewisville
Alexander Pharmakis	City of Farmer's Branch
Benjamin Neal	City of Fort Worth
Meeting Guests	
Meghna Tare	UTA
Cassidy Ellis	Ameresco
Barbara Coombs	Environmental Benchmarking LLC
Jonathan Fredi	Atmos Energy
Magan Lersch	GSA
Margaret Cook	HARC
Lee Battle	City of Allen
Kevin Overton	City of Dallas
James Orenstein	Trinity River Community Solar Systems
Tyler Leverenz	Town of Flower Mound
Jaime Bretzmann	City of Plano
Molly Rooke	Dallas Sierra Club
Michelle Wood-Ramirez	Tarrant Regional Water District
Evyvan Tankersley	City of McKinney
Autumn Radle	Texas PACE Authority
Grace Darling	Green Arlington Foundation
Lauren Juarez	Citizens' Climate Lobby, DFW
Erin Diehl	City of Dallas
Cassidy Campbell	NCTCOG

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Crysta Guzman	NCTCOG
Edith Marvin	NCTCOG
Breanne Johnson	NCTCOG
Dorothy Gilliam	NCTCOG
Lori Clark	NCTCOG
Kate Zielke	NCTCOG
Jenny Narvaez	NCTCOG

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