MARCH 2025

COMMUNITY-BASED OUTREACH IN NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS

COMS ENGAGEMENT PLAN FOR EMT-2023-CA-5023

NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

1 Intent of COMS Engagement Plan

Recent flood events in Texas have highlighted the need for more comprehensive planning in urban areas. This is particularly important in the upstream portions of the Trinity River watershed, where urban growth and development is expected to continue and where unmanaged growth will have strongly negative consequences on downstream communities like Dallas and Fort Worth. The Transportation and Stormwater Infrastructure (TSI) project is a planning study launched to reduce future flood risk in these rapidly developing areas. The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is partnering with federal and local agencies and state universities to conduct the study. More than $6 million is being provided for the study by the Texas Water Development Board, Federal Highway Administration/Texas Department of Transportation, and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). NCTCOG has received an additional $4 million from the Texas General Land Office to expand the geographic scope of the study.

The TSI study is divided into two study areas: the West Study Area, which is fully funded and includes portions of Denton, Wise, and Tarrant counties; and the North Study Area, which is fully funded and includes portions of Wise, Parker, Tarrant, Johnson, Ellis, and Dallas counties (Figure 1).

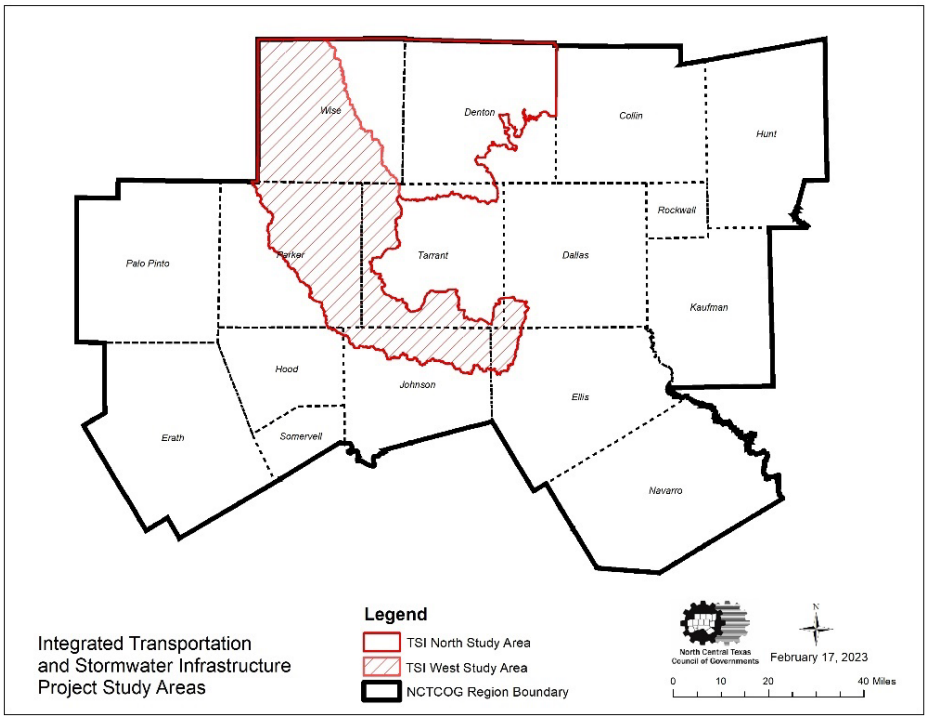


Figure 1. Transportation and Stormwater Infrastructure Project Study Areas

The total study area includes 85 cities or towns and part or all of eight counties. The population of the cities and towns ranges from 33 in the town of Draper to 1,304,379 in the city of Dallas. The median population size of these cities and towns is less than 5,000 (Table 1). Jurisdictions of such varied sizes and resources require different flood reduction strategies. For this reason, engaging local governments is essential to producing effective study deliverables.

Table 1.

TSI City and Town Populations in 2020 Decennial Census

Name	Type	2020 Population	Name	Type	2020 Population
Aledo	City	4858	Hudson Oaks	City	2174
Alvarado	City	4739	Joshua	City	7891
Alvord	Town	1351	Justin	City	4409
Annetta	Town	3041	Keller	City	45776
Annetta North	Town	554	Kennedale	City	8517
Annetta South	Town	621	Krugerville	City	1766
Argyle	City	4403	Krum	City	5483
Arlington	City	394266	Lake Bridgeport	City	339
Aubrey	City	5006	Lake Dallas	City	7708
Aurora	City	1390	Lake Worth	City	4711
Azle	City	13369	Lakeside	Town	1649
Bartonville	Town	1725	Lakewood Village	City	635
Benbrook	City	24520	Lewisville	City	111822
Boyd	Town	1416	Little Elm	City	46453
Briaroaks	City	507	Mansfield	City	72602
Bridgeport	City	5923	Midlothian	City	35125
Burleson	City	47641	New Fairview	City	1386
Cedar Hill	City	49148	Newark	City	1096
Celina	City	16739	Northlake	Town	5201
Chico	City	946	Oak Point	City	4357
Copper Canyon	Town	1731	Paradise	City	475
Corinth	City	22634	Pelican Bay	City	2049
Cresson	City	1349	Pilot Point	City	4381
Cross Roads	Town	1744	Ponder	Town	2442
Cross Timber	Town	362	Prosper	Town	30174
Crowley	City	18070	Providence Village	Town	7691
Dallas	City	1304379	Reno	City	2878
Decatur	City	6538	Rhome	City	1630
Denton	City	139869	Roanoke	City	9665
DISH	Town	437	Runaway Bay	City	1546
Double Oak	Town	3054	Sanctuary	Town	337
Draper[1]	Town	33	Sanger	City	8839
Everman	City	6154	Sansom Park	City	5454
Flower Mound	Town	75956	Shady Shores	Town	2764
Forest Hill	City	13955	Southlake	City	31265
Fort Worth	City	918915	Springtown	City	3064
Frisco	City	200509	Trophy Club	Town	13688
Godley	City	1450	Venus	Town	4361
Grand Prairie	City	196100	Weatherford	City	30854
Grapevine	City	50631	Westlake	Town	1623
Haslet	City	1952	White Settlement	City	18269
Hickory Creek	Town	4718	Willow Park	City	4936
Highland Village	City	15899			

[1] Draper is also known as Corral City.

This COMS Engagement Plan for Community-Based Outreach in North Central Texas outlines NCTCOG's COMS Capabilities and Accomplishments, Vision for Implementing and Participating in Risk MAP, Recommendations Regarding Action and Outreach Potential, Community-Based Outreach, Rural Stakeholder Outreach, and Development Stakeholder Outreach.

This engagement plan identifies strategies for engaging and educating local governments on future flood risk and mitigation strategies within the context of TSI. This includes identifying how the project utilizes Risk MAP data including Base Level Engineering and the Trinity River Watershed Hydrology Assessment.

NCTCOG is developing a broader engagement plan for the TSI project funded by the Texas Water Development Board and Federal Highway Administration/Texas Department of Transportation. The work done for the COMS engagement plan will leverage and enhance the broader plan.

2 NCTCOG's COMS Capabilities and Accomplishments

As a council of governments, NCTCOG is an association of, by, and for local governments. The agency assists with regional planning and cooperation. This existing relationship with local governments provides NCTCOG with an advantage in communicating with these governments and their respective communities about flood risk mapping and hazard mitigation.

NCTCOG staff is integrating the TSI project into quarterly meetings for relevant committees of city and county staff, including the Flood Management Task Force, Upper Trinity River Basin Coordinating Committee, and the Public Works Council. Opportunities also exist to incorporate TSI concepts into additional committees associated with building codes and stormwater.

NCTCOG engages local governments in flood hazard mapping as a FEMA Cooperating Technical Partner. NCTCOG has played this role since 2002. Since FY 2012, NCTCOG has engaged local governments in seven Discovery efforts and 15 Flood Risk Identification Projects. During these projects NCTCOG has communicated with hydrologic and hydraulics engineers and local government partners about Base Level Engineering and/or the Trinity River Watershed Hydrology Assessment. These projects:

- Enable communities to express their risks based on population growth and other factors;
- Produce new hydrologic and hydraulic data;
- Validate previously unverified streams;
- Identify priorities for updating maps;
- Produce detailed flood risk analyses; and
- Unify partners.

In addition to the Cooperating Technical Partner effort, NCTCOG has and continues to engage local governments in the TSI study. NCTCOG and study partners participated in a round of four meetings in August 2022 to introduce local government staff and elected officials to the TSI study. A subsequent round of four meetings was conducted in April-May 2023. Between these two rounds

of meetings, 94 unique attendees participated. NCTCOG asked local governments to provide datasets via email or an online, interactive tool called Map Your Watershed. Attendees responded to a survey about project goals and their perceptions and likely participation in the project.

To date, local government staff and elected officials have participated in seven TSI Technical Advisory Group meetings, six Steering Committee meetings, and three workshops related to the project. These engagement opportunities have been conducted in person, virtually, and through hybrid technology.

TSI study partners also have begun more individualized outreach with visits to nine cities in the TSI study area. Study partners received a tour of the cities and observed locations where the cities face flooding challenges. The information gained during these site visits will provide valuable insight into the flood risk and resource challenges cities face. NCTCOG will continue efforts to reach out to and visit individual local governments. Following each site visit, NCTCOG plans to incorporate data gathered during site visits into the study's technical analysis to demonstrate that NCTCOG is responsive to the feedback. This information also will be considered as the study team generates deliverables to ensure those deliverables meet the needs of the local governments.

To summarize, NCTCOG's strategic approach to local government engagement includes:

- Leveraging existing relationships with and reputation among elected officials and local government staff;
- Integrating TSI concepts into existing NCTCOG-supported committees;
- Building upon work already completed during Discovery and Flood Risk Identification Projects;
- Conducting county-scale meetings to promote the TSI project;
- Seeking local governments' input via survey technology, interactive online tools, and one-on-one visits to cities and counties; and
- Documenting the needs of cities and counties.

When surveyed, local government staff and elected officials responded that "reduce flooding" was the TSI goal that would provide the greatest benefit to their community but would also be the most challenging to accomplish. It's essential that the TSI project address critical factors in successfully supporting cities and counties in their efforts to reduce their risk. Early outreach for the TSI project has helped NCTCOG identify these critical factors, including:

- Effectively gathering information from cities and counties;
- Planning on a watershed scale;
- Integrating innovative stormwater infrastructure;
- Providing data and project outputs in formats local governments can use; and
- Developing flood risk-reduction strategies that can be implemented by local governments as a whole.

3 NCTCOG's Vision for Implementing and Participating in Risk MAP

NCTCOG's TSI activities advance the vision, goals, and objectives of Risk MAP by encouraging communities to act to mitigate risk. While TSI outcomes are non-regulatory, the project follows a path parallel to that of Risk MAP: identifying risk, assessing risk through analysis and mapping, communicating risk, and reducing risk.

3.1 Identifying Risk

NCTCOG and the TSI study team are fulfilling the intent of Discovery by seeking out local governments' knowledge and information. Data has been collected following the county-scale meetings conducted for the larger-scale TSI effort. Data also has been collected via the Map Your Watershed online tool. NCTCOG will initiate additional one-on-one meetings with cities and counties because these meetings provide the greatest opportunity to gather both technical data and "human data" about future growth, resource challenges, and the causes and damage associated with past flood events. NCTCOG will seek out comprehensive plans, future land use plans, hazard mitigation plans, and other documentation that will inform the TSI project. Technical partners will seek out data related to hydrologic and hydraulic modeling, including current conditions, future conditions, and future conditions with transportation infrastructure. These partners also will seek out data including stream characterization, land use/land cover, population, precipitation, transportation infrastructure, and environmental factors.

3.2 Assessing Risk

TSI assesses risk through analysis and mapping conducted by the larger study's technical partners, the US Army Corps of Engineers, University of Texas at Arlington, and Texas A&M AgriLife. These partners will investigate and add detail to the Trinity River Watershed Hydrology Assessment (WHA) hydrologic model. Beginning in a pilot study area, the group will add subbasin breaks as needed for models to produce additional discharge points at locations of interest, such as tributary drainage, current and future bridge locations, environmental features, and possible detention sites. Efforts will address both 1D and 2D base level engineering data. Once the methodology is developed during the pilot study, it will be applied to the broader study area. Ultimately this work will enhance existing data and models, such as base level engineering data, the Interagency Flood Risk Management Trinity River Watershed Hydrology Assessment, new storm shifting tools, and impervious surface geographic information system layers to estimate storm runoff for future conditions.

3.3 Communicating Risk

TSI diverges from the regulatory Risk MAP process by sharing data analysis and mapping outputs via county-scale meetings, a TSI data portal, frequently asked questions or other written communications, and other means as requested by local governments. Initial data outputs will be shared in county-scale meetings several months before the close of the broader TSI project, giving communities a "first look" and opportunity to comment on the project deliverables. The study team

can then incorporate this feedback and modify the deliverables, which will be presented in their final form along with the data portal at county-scale meetings that close out the broader TSI project.

3.4 Reducing Risk

TSI again takes a different approach than Risk MAP but still addresses the goal of reducing risk. The project encourages local governments to adopt higher standards, implement innovative stormwater infrastructure, improve flood warning systems, and construct resilient transportation infrastructure. The project will develop a funding strategy toolbox that local governments and partners can use to implement identified projects.

TSI will encourage higher standards by:

- Documenting potential options or incentives to provide for conservation and preservation of flood-prone areas such as purchase of development rights, cluster development, etc.;
- Drafting model development code and recommended floodplain management ordinances;
- Proposing a list of city and county planning and development documents in which to incorporate project outcomes, including comprehensive plans, building code updates, design criteria manuals, capital improvement programs, development review checklists, etc.; and
- Evaluating opportunities to expand the Corridor Development Certificate process into the study area.

TSI will promote innovative stormwater infrastructure by:

- Determining how stormwater and transportation infrastructure can be integrated;
- Reporting on land use tools, best practices, and innovative infrastructure potential strategy impacts;
- Evaluating existing models and work already occurring in the region;
- Developing an online tool or other mechanism that identifies the appropriate project type, location, and size of stormwater infrastructure and their suitability for different locations; and
- Prioritizing locations for stormwater infrastructure.

TSI will improve flood warning systems by:

- Recommending equipment, resources, and organizational requirements to produce real-time forecasts.

TSI will promote resilient transportation infrastructure by:

- Determining existing and future transportation facilities that are at risk of flooding based on future development scenarios;

- Identifying tools and strategies to mitigate flooding;
- Developing performance measures to inform project selection and prioritization for regional transportation plans;
- Modeling ideal locations for regional ponds and other flood control structures; and
- Determining how stormwater and transportation infrastructure can be integrated.

4 Recommendations Regarding Action and Outreach Potential

TSI provides ample opportunities for action and outreach. The larger TSI project's final deliverables will recommend actions to reduce flood risk and will identify opportunities for continued outreach between NCTCOG and local governments.

Actions to reduce flood risk will include implementation projects for future regional flood plans. Any recommended solutions to reduce flood risk will be permittable, constructable, and implementable. Recommended solutions will have no negative effect on neighboring areas in accordance with statutory requirements for regional flood plans per Texas Water Code §16.062(i) and (j)(2). These recommendations may be developed after the period of performance of Community-Based Outreach in North Central Texas.

Opportunities for continued outreach between NCTCOG and local governments will include continuing to engage local governments in Risk MAP and in NCTCOG's floodplain management programs, such as the Trinity River COMMON VISION and Corridor Development Certificate process. This process creates higher standards for partner communities to stabilize flood risk along the Trinity River.

5 Community-Based Outreach

NCTCOG will incorporate community-based outreach into the TSI project by identifying communities, seeking greater participation from these communities, and discussing topics such as flooding and population growth during meetings and/or workshops.

5.1 Identifying Communities

NCTCOG conducted a preliminary analysis of communities within the study areas using Census Bureau data and geographic information systems. Part or all of eight counties and 85 cities or towns are included in the study area. Census Designated Places will be excluded; these geographic areas are unincorporated, and their communities' needs will be addressed in the study as NCTCOG engages with counties.

5.1.1 Communities as a Whole

NCTCOG will seek to visit communities of varying population sizes and geographic location to ensure all voices are heard. Communities of different sizes have varying ability to conduct

planning and flood mitigation; NCTCOG will produce study deliverables that meet the needs of all these communities.

5.1.2 Flood Risk

NCTCOG will overlay geospatial community boundary data with geospatial flood risk data to fine-tune prioritization of local governments. Floodplain spatial data (Attachment 1) and additional tools may be used during this prioritization process. However, the study acknowledges that many communities experience flash flooding outside floodplains; therefore, NCTCOG will seek to engage communities as a whole, regardless of their proximity to floodplains.

5.2 Seeking Greater Participation from Communities as a Whole

NCTCOG will engage communities using site visits and seeking participation in other TSI outreach events.

These other outreach events are part of the broader TSI project's stakeholder engagement efforts. They include a Technical Advisory Group that meets quarterly; a Steering Committee of mayors, county judges, and city managers; training workshops covering TSI concepts; and stakeholder meetings to disseminate project deliverables. The FEMA funding for Community-Based Outreach in North Central Texas enhances NCTCOG's outreach in both study areas, but it also enables NCTCOG to launch that outreach in the North Study Area prior to the funding agreement with the Texas General Land Office. NCTCOG staff will identify, email, and call local government staff to encourage them to participate in these meetings and workshops. Meeting deliverables may include agendas, presentations, and meeting summaries.

During the period of performance for Community-Based Outreach in North Central Texas, NCTCOG will conduct eight or more meetings of the Technical Advisory Group. The Technical Advisory Group was formed to provide input to the TSI Project team regarding policy, outreach, data, and challenges that communities face. The goals of the advisory group are as follows:

- Use technical and local knowledge to provide policy guidance and recommendations that should be developed or updated to the project team;
- Provide technical input to identify gaps in the existing future planning landscape and share ideas of innovation;
- Give feedback on data and modeling needs for the study area;
- Provide guidance that helps project team produce products that benefit the intended communities and stakeholders;
- Act as a link between project team and community leadership;
- Support and represent the interests of stakeholders within a larger context of flood mitigation;
- Collaborate with TSI project to support shared goals in local communities and increase the project's visibility, both internally and externally; and

- Provide advice on overall approach best practices, lessons learned that will reduce the impact of flooding.

NCTCOG also will conduct at least seven meetings of the Steering Committee during the period of performance for Community-Based Outreach in North Central Texas. The Steering Committee was formed to gain buy-in for TSI from elected officials and city managers and to seek the committee's advice on engaging other local governments.

Finally, during the period of performance for Community-Based Outreach in North Central Texas, NCTCOG will conduct at least 12 site visits or meetings with individual cities, towns, or counties or with geographic groups of cities (such as attending a county mayors' group). These meetings will provide an opportunity for NCTCOG to collect information on the unique flooding risks and other challenges these jurisdictions face. This will enable the study team to better develop project deliverables that meet the needs of the communities as a whole.

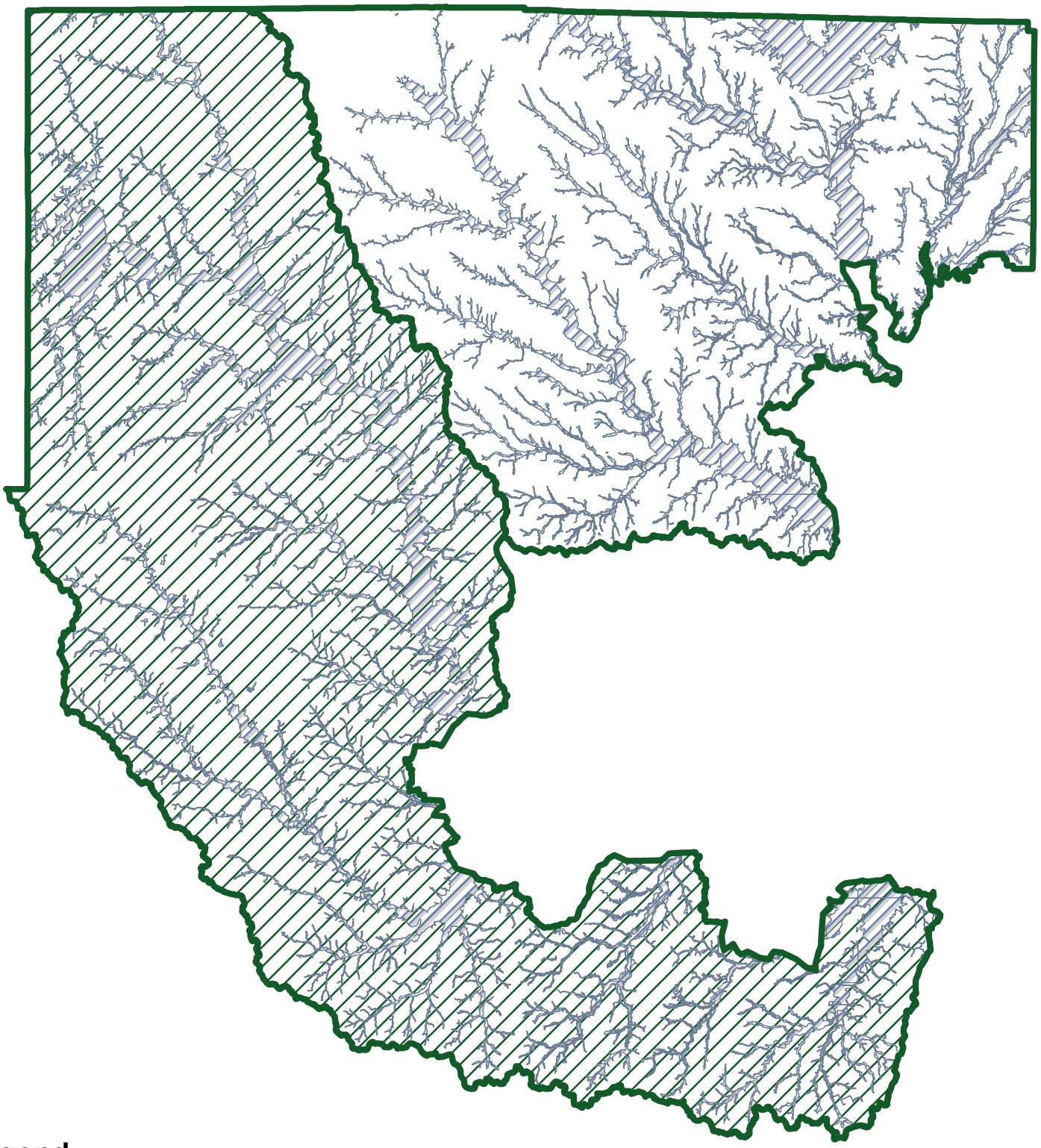
6 Summary

NCTCOG seeks to reduce future flood risk in developing areas of North Central Texas by engaging local governments and seeking their input on strategies best suited to their size and resources. These 85 cities or towns and 8 counties vary greatly. NCTCOG has a history of engaging local governments on floodplain management through the agency's committees, Risk MAP and Discovery studies within the Cooperating Technical Partnership program, and previous outreach efforts for the larger TSI study funded by the Texas Water Development Board and Federal Highway Administration/Texas Department of Transportation.

The TSI project is designed to parallel the goals of Risk MAP, including identifying risk, assessing risk through analysis and mapping, communicating risk, and reducing risk. TSI will encourage higher standards, promote innovative stormwater infrastructure, improve flood warning systems, and promote resilient transportation infrastructure.

The study team will engage in community-based outreach by identifying communities and the flood risk they face. The team will use this data to include a variety of cities and towns for outreach including site visits, stakeholder meetings, and workshops.

FEMA Special Flood Hazard Area



Legend

West Study Area

North Study Area

FEMA Special Flood Hazard Area

Special Flood Hazard Area

Special Flood Hazard Area was downloaded from FEMA's Flood Map Service Center. This area is defined by FEMA as the area that will be inundated by the flood event having a 1-percent change of being equaled or exceeded in any given year.

0 5 10 20 Miles

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North Central Texas Council of Governments

January 24, 2024