

AGENDA

Regional Transportation Council Thursday, June 8, 2023 North Central Texas Council of Governments

**1:00 pm Full RTC Business Agenda
(NCTCOG Guest Secured Wireless Connection Password: rangers!)**

Pledge to the United States and Texas Flags

- 1:00 – 1:10**
1. **Opportunity for Public Comment on Today's Agenda**
☒ Information Minutes: 10
Item Summary: Members of the public may comment on any item(s) on today's agenda at this time. If speaking, please complete a Speaker Request Card, available at the meeting, and provide it to the North Central Texas Council of Governments designated staff person. A maximum of three (3) minutes is permitted per speaker. At the conclusion of this item, no further opportunities for public comment will be provided for the duration of the meeting.
Background: N/A
- 1:10 – 1:15**
2. **Approval of May 11, 2023, Minutes**
☒ Action ☐ Possible Action ☐ Information Minutes: 5
Presenter: Duncan Webb, RTC Chair
Item Summary: Approval of the May 11, 2023, meeting minutes contained in [Electronic Item 2](#) will be requested.
Background: N/A
 3. **Consent Agenda (There are no items on the Consent Agenda)**
☐ Action ☐ Possible Action ☐ Information Minutes: 0
- 1:15 – 1:30**
4. **Orientation to Agenda/Director of Transportation Report**
☐ Action ☐ Possible Action ☒ Information Minutes: 15
Presenter: Michael Morris, NCTCOG
 1. Texas Legislature Testimony: Number 2
([Transportation - S/C Discretionary Funding Allocations - May 18, 2023 \(granicus.com\)](#))
(There will be no discussion on this item, pending Legislative Report)
 2. Illumination Agreements - Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)
 3. City of Dallas/Dallas Area Rapid Transit Silver Line Mediation
 4. Trinity Railway Express/Burlington Northern Santa Fe Mediation
 5. City of Dallas Conditional Support for Texas Department of Transportation/Mobility Plan for Recommendations for Interstate Highway 345
 6. Regional Broadband Program Updates
([Electronic Item 4.1](#))

7. Certification of Emerging and Reliable Transportation Technology (CERTT) Round 2: Local Government Submittals for Swyft Cities
8. No City of Irving Summit 2023
9. Progress North Texas (Handout)
10. 2023 Ozone Season Update ([Electronic Item 4.2](#))
11. Status Report on Climate Pollution Reduction Grants ([Electronic Item 4.3](#))
12. Upcoming Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Events (<https://www.dfwcleancities.org/events>)
13. Air Quality Funding Opportunities for Vehicles (www.nctcog.org/aqfunding)
14. Local Clean Air Project Spotlight ([Electronic Item 4.4](#))
15. June Public Meeting Notice ([Electronic Item 4.5](#))
16. Public Comments Report ([Electronic Item 4.6](#))
17. Recent Correspondence ([Electronic Item 4.7](#))
18. Recent News Articles ([Electronic Item 4.8](#))
19. Recent Press Releases ([Electronic Item 4.9](#))

1:30 – 1:40

5. Contingency Emergency Item - Amtrak

☒ Action ☐ Possible Action ☐ Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Michael Morris, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff is requesting ratification of emergency funding authorization of \$700,000 in Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) funds for Amtrak's Heartland Flyer Passenger Service from Fort Worth to Oklahoma City.

Background: Regional Transportation Council (RTC) Policy P20-02 authorizes the Transportation Director to take emergency funding actions up to approximately \$5,000,000 due to necessity of time or consequence. The policy requires the emergency action to be placed on the next scheduled RTC meeting for ratification. Texas' share of funding for Amtrak's Heartland Flyer passenger service from Fort Worth to Oklahoma City has a current funding shortfall of approximately \$700,000. The State's Supplemental Budget for the biennium ending August 31, 2023, did not include funding to address this shortfall. The Transportation Director took emergency action to allocate \$700,000 in RTR funding for the Heartland Flyer Passenger Service to avoid a service disruption. Staff is meeting with Legislature officials if other means are available, otherwise requesting the RTC to ratify the emergency action pursuant to RTC Policy P20-02.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Transit

1:40 – 1:50

6. National Juneteenth Museum Funding Request

☒ Action ☐ Possible Action ☐ Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Michael Morris, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff is requesting Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of proposed investments at the future National Juneteenth Museum. An amount not to exceed \$3 million is proposed.

Background: A national museum commemorating Juneteenth is proposed to be located in Fort Worth along East Rosedale Street east of Interstate Highway 35W. The community has requested assistance with infrastructure improvements at the future museum site. [Electronic Item 6](#) contains additional details on the proposed partnership.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Roadway, Transit

1:50 – 2:00

7. Five Mile Creek/Revolver Trade

☒ Action ☐ Possible Action ☐ Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Brian Dell, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of a proposed federal/local partnership with the City of Dallas and the distribution of these funds and prior Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) partnership funds between the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Revolver and RTC Local funds are being requested. This action is contingent upon City of Dallas approval.

Background: The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) needs a source of local funds to pay expenses for federal projects/programs prior to federal reimbursement. With the award of multiple federal discretionary grants to the region, the payment sizes have become significantly larger. In addition, NCTCOG would like to expand the pool of RTC Local funds to allow the RTC to expedite projects and programs. To address these needs, a federal/local funding partnership is being proposed between the RTC and the City of Dallas. The partnership will provide funding for several sections of the Five Mile Creek Trail in south Dallas and in return, the City would send local funds to help with federal reimbursement issues and to increase the funds in the RTC Local pool. [Electronic Item 7](#) contains additional details on the partnership and a proposal regarding how to distribute these and additional local funds from a previously approved partnership with DART between the MPO Revolver fund and the RTC Local pool.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Air Quality, Bike/Ped+

2:00 – 2:10

8. **Work Zone Data Exchange: Support for Local Partners**

☒ Action ☐ Possible Action ☐ Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Tom Bamonte, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff is requesting Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval to access a variety of services that improve the identification, monitoring, and reporting of work zones and to deploy these services to assist local partners.

Background: Work zones pose challenges for both human and automated drivers. In 2022, more than 25,000 traffic crashes occurred in work zones in Texas, resulting in 205 deaths and another 788 serious injuries. Working with industry and state Department of Transportation partners, including Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) has developed the [Work Zone Data Exchange](#) (WZDx). The WZDx is a standardized work zone data reporting protocol for use by (a) public agencies hosting work zones, (b) contractors performing work in work zones, and (c) smart devices like traffic cones and message boards that transmit information in real time about work zones. The auto industry, automated vehicle developers, freight industry, public transit operators, and travel navigation services have all indicated that better work zone information will help improve roadway/vehicle operations and safety. In 2022, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) conducted a procurement of WZDx services through NCTCOG's TXSHARE cooperative purchasing program. [TXSHARE](#) procurements are conducted in compliance with federal procurement requirements so the contracts can be utilized by public agencies locally and around the country. Five vendors providing a variety of WZDx-related services were selected. Vendor information is available [here](#). Staff recommends that Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) position itself as a technology and safety leader by utilizing these WZDx services to improve the identification and monitoring of work zones and the reporting of work zone data. Local partners will be able to access better information around work zones on their roadways. Staff requests RTC action: (1) Approving the WZDx Project; (2) Directing staff to engage regional partners on project scoping and execution; (3) Utilizing existing funding and NCTCOG contracts to advance the Project; and (4) Authorizing staff to take administrative steps necessary to implement the Project. Utilizing existing NCTCOG contracts to provide WZDx-related services for the region will be more efficient than requiring each local partner to make arrangements with one or more of the WZDx providers. [Electronic Item 8](#) includes a presentation summarizing the project.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Roadway, Safety

2:10 – 2:15

9. Safe Streets and Roads for All Regional Grant Application

☒ Action ☐ Possible Action ☐ Information Minutes: 5

Presenter: Karla Windsor, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Regional Transportation Council approval of a regional planning project submittal to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Discretionary Grant program and approval of the partnership for a City of Dallas submittal of the implementation project of last year's Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd and Cedar Crest Blvd. in Dallas developed by the North Central Texas Council of Government (NCTCOG) will be requested.

Background: The United States Department of Transportation has announced a Notice of Funding Opportunity for the solicitation of applications for FY23 SS4A funding. A maximum of one grant application of any type may be submitted per agency. Staff will provide an overview of the proposed regional planning grant that will be submitted by NCTCOG. Total project cost is \$6.25 million. Staff will be submitting for \$5 million in federal funds and is requesting \$1.25 million of Regional Toll Revenue funds for the required 20 percent local match. Staff will also present on a partnership for implementation of the FY22 NCTCOG-submitted implementation grant of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and Cedar Crest Blvd. in Dallas near Fair Park. The City of Dallas will be the lead for the FY23 application with NCTCOG and Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) as partners. The anticipated total cost for the project is \$27.25 million with an anticipated federal request of \$21.8 million. The local match will be covered by the City of Dallas and DART. An overview of the proposed project is contained in [Electronic Item 9](#).

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Bike/Ped+, Safety

2:15 – 2:25

10. Federal and State Legislative Update

☐ Action ☐ Possible Action ☒ Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Rebekah Gongora, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will provide an update on federal and State legislative actions related to transportation and air quality issues affecting the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Background: Transportation issues continue to be a focus for both the United States Congress and the Texas Legislature. The 1st session of the 118th U.S. Congress convened on January 3, 2023. The 88th session of the Texas Legislature convened on January 10, 2023, and concluded on May 29, 2023. This item will allow staff to provide updates on key positions of the Regional Transportation Council and provide an overview of transportation and air quality legislation approved by the Texas Legislature.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Roadway, Safety

2:25 – 2:35

11. **Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025 United Planning Work Program**

☐ Action ☐ Possible Action ☒ Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Vickie Alexander, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will present a summary on the development of the proposed FY2024 and FY2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for Regional Transportation Planning.

Background: North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff, in cooperation with local governments and transportation agencies, is currently developing the draft FY2024 and FY2025 UPWP. This document identifies NCTCOG staff work activities to be performed between October 1, 2023, and September 30, 2025. Prior to the June Regional Transportation Council (RTC) meeting, a draft copy of the UPWP document will be provided to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) for review and comment. Upon submittal to TxDOT, a copy of this draft will be available online for RTC review at: www.nctcog.org/trans/study/unified-planning-work-program. Regional Transportation Council action on the UPWP will be sought at the July meeting. The final document is due to TxDOT on July 31, 2023.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Administrative

2:35 – 2:45

12. **Automated Transportation System Development Study**

☐ Action ☐ Possible Action ☒ Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Brendon Wheeler, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will provide an update on the results of the Automated Transportation System (ATS) Development Study, including technology assessments and project evaluations.

Background: As part of the Regional Automated Transportation System (ATS) Initiative (formerly referred to as the "People Mover Initiative"), the recently completed ATS Development Study assessed the state of the ATS market, including vehicles for moving people and cargo/goods; developed standards for innovative, lightweight, and modular guideways; and evaluated the state of the industry for dynamic wireless electric charging. The study also evaluated its findings against two pilot projects and two retrofit opportunities, to ensure compatibility with existing regional efforts. Staff will present a summary of the study results as well as information on ATS pilot/retrofit opportunities.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Goods Movement, Transit

2:45 – 2:55

13. **Federal Performance Measures Condition Targets for National Highway System Pavement/Bridge Access**

☐ Action ☐ Possible Action ☒ Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Jeff Neal, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will brief the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) on continued collaboration between North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) on evaluating and establishing condition targets for National Highway System (NHS) pavement and bridge assets, in accordance with existing and updated rulemaking for required Federal performance measures (PM2).

Background: The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act required certain performance measures, including two-and four-year projected pavement and bridge condition ratings for designated NHS facilities, be addressed in the long-range metropolitan transportation planning process. During the first four-year performance period, which occurred starting in 2018, the RTC affirmed regional support for TxDOT's statewide good and poor condition pavement and bridge (PM2) targets, and it also agreed to collaborate with TxDOT and local governments on various project planning and programming efforts as contributions toward accomplishment of NHS pavement/bridge performance goals. PM2 rulemaking was updated with passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) ahead of the second four-year performance period, which began in 2022. Consideration of new two-and four-year target-setting for statewide good and poor condition NHS pavement/bridge assets now includes the following factors:

- TxDOT is required to consider extreme weather and resilience as part of the lifecycle planning and risk management analyses within its Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP) resulting from BIL changes to Title 23, U.S.C. 119(e)(4). Integration of extreme weather and resilience risk implications may affect target projections.
- Metrics of pavement condition for all NHS facilities are now identical, with cracking, rutting, and faulting indices added to International Roughness Index (IRI) ratings for non-Interstate pavement assets. This change may have the greatest impact on condition estimates for off-system NHS arterial roadways.

Accompanying [Electronic Item 13](#), staff will explain updated condition similarities and differences between statewide and regional NHS pavements and bridges, outline the potential effects of new BIL formula/discretionary funds on condition projections, and provide status updates for ongoing and planned initiatives aimed at fulfilling the RTC's performance goal obligations for TxDOT. Public input will also be obtained and considered ahead of RTC action, which is required within 180 days of TxDOT's establishment of statewide PM2 targets.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Administrative, Roadway

2:55 – 3:05

14. Air Quality Ozone: Federal vs. State

☐ Action ☐ Possible Action ☒ Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Jenny Narvaez, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will provide information on the national and state process for air quality standards and current local efforts to meet them.

Background: Sections 108 and 109 of the Clean Air Act govern the establishment, review, and revision, as appropriate, of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for each criteria pollutant to provide protection for the nation's public health and the environment. The Clean Air Act requires periodic review of the science behind how the standards are set and the standards themselves. Once a standard has been revised by the Environmental Protection Agency, the State has the responsibility of creating a State Implementation Plan documenting how it will comply with the air quality standard. Staff will inform the Council on the process of reviewing and setting, the plan toward attaining, and the region's work toward coming into compliance with these standards. For more information, please see [Electronic Item 14](#).

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Air Quality

3:05 – 3:10

15. Election of Regional Transportation Council Officers

☒ Action ☐ Possible Action ☐ Information Minutes: 5

Presenter: Andy Eads, RTC Nominating Subcommittee Chair

Item Summary: Approval of Regional Transportation Council (RTC) officers for the next 12-month period will be requested.

Background: According to the RTC Bylaws and Operating Procedures, the officers of RTC are elected to serve for a term of one year. The Nominating Subcommittee is charged with providing a slate of officers to the full Council for consideration in June of each year. The Nominating Subcommittee is tasked with confirming that the current Vice Chair and Secretary should move up to the office of Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, and nominate a new Secretary. Members of the nominating committee are eligible to be nominated for an officer position. The Nominating Subcommittee, in its deliberations, shall address issues of diversity, including sensitivity to gender, ethnicity, and geography in its recommendations. Officers shall be elected public officials appointed by and from the governing body of the member government. The slate of officers shall reflect leadership in rough proportion to the revenue distribution between the Eastern and Western Subregions. This will not be measured on a year-to-year basis but will be aggregated over longer periods of time. The new officers will begin their terms at the conclusion of the June meeting.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Administrative

16. **Progress Reports**

☐ Action ☐ Possible Action ☒ Information

Item Summary: Progress Reports are provided in the items below.

- RTC Attendance ([Electronic Item 16.1](#))
- STTC Attendance and Minutes ([Electronic Item 16.2](#))

17. **Other Business (Old or New):** This item provides an opportunity for members to bring items of interest before the group.

18. **Future Agenda Items:** This item provides an opportunity for members to bring items of future interest before the Council.

19. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Regional Transportation Council is scheduled for ***1:00 pm on July 13, 2023, in the Transportation Council Room.***

MINUTES**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL
May 11, 2023**

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) met on May 11, 2023, at 1:00 pm in the Transportation Council Room. The following members or representatives were present: Daniel Alemán Jr., Steve Babick, Dennis Bailey, Rick Bailey, Adam Bazaldua, Elizabeth Beck, Gyna Bivens, Alan Blaylock, Ceason Clemens, Dianne Costa, Theresa Daniel, Pat Deen (representing J.D. Clark), Janet DePuy, Michael Evans, Gary Fickes, George Fuller, Raul Gonzalez, Barry Gordon, Rick Grady, Lane Grayson, Mojoy Haddad, Ron Jensen, Brandon Jones, Brad LaMorgese, Cara Mendelsohn, Jesse Moreno (representing Omar Narvaez), Raj Narayanan, Matthew Porter (representing Chris Schulmeister), Manny Ramirez, Jim Ross, David Salazar, Gary Slagel, (representing Michele Wong-Krause), Andy Sommerman (representing Clay Lewis Jenkins), Jeremy Tompkins, Oscar Trevino, William Tsao, Chris Watts, and Duncan Webb.

Others present at the meeting included: Siobhan Albert, Vickie Alexander, Cameron Anderson, Bruce Artsen, Melissa Baker, Micah Baker, Tom Bamonte, Will Barresi, Natalie Bettger, Joslyn Billings, Alberta Blair, David Boski, Jack Carr, Molly Carroll, Angie Carson, Curt Cassidy, Meredith Cebelak, Shawn Conrad, John Cordary, Jeff Coulter, Dawn Dalrymple, Clarence Daugherty, Brian Dell, Chad Edwards, Kevin Feldt, Leigh Ferguson, Nathan Frohman, Carmen Garcia, Rebekah Gongora, Christie Gotti, Tony Hartzel, Joel James, Kristopher Johnson, Dan Kessler, Tony Kimmey, Ken Kirkpatrick, Chris Klaus, Tracey Knight, Michael Knowles, Aaron Long, Dillon Maroney, Mindy Mize, Collin Moffett, Bert Moore, Erin Moore, Jenny Narvaez, Jeff Neal, Mark Nelson, Donald Parker, Michael Peters, James Powell, Vercie Pruitt-Jenkins, Guillermo Quintanilla, Abbas Rastandeh, Kathryn Rotter, Devon Skinner, Randy Skinner, Toni Stehling, Shannon Stevenson, Brendon Wheeler, Amanda Wilson, Brian Wilson, Michele Wong-Krause, Casey Wright, Jared Wright, and Susan Young.

1. **Opportunity for Public Comment on Today's Agenda:** This item allows members of the public an opportunity to comment on agenda items. Regional Transportation Council Chair Duncan Webb asked if there were any public comments. No members of the public chose to speak at the meeting or provide written comments.
2. **Approval of April 13, 2023, Minutes:** The minutes of the April 13, 2023, meeting were approved as submitted in Electronic Item 2. Barry Gordon (M); Theresa Daniel (S). The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Consent Agenda:** There were no items on the Consent Agenda.
4. **Orientation to Agenda/Director of Transportation Report:** Chair Webb announced the appointments of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) Nominating Subcommittee: Chair, Denton County Judge, Andy Eads, Vice Chair, Mayor George Fuller with the City of McKinney, Commissioner Rick Bailey with Johnson County, Councilmember Michael D. Crain with the City of Fort Worth, Mayor Ron Jensen with the City of Grand Prairie, Councilmember Ed Moore with the City of Garland, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem with the City of Dallas, and Michele Wong-Krause, Chair of Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART). He mentioned Vercie Pruitt-Jenkins will schedule a Nominating Subcommittee in June. Michael Morris announced Councilmember Rick Grady's

retirement reception was on May 24, 2023, and Thomas Bamonte's resignation on June 9th, 2023. Michael reminded the Council of the Metropolitan planning process three c's under federal rule: cooperative, comprehensive, and continuous, related to RTC policy discussion restricting third parties from recommending their will on the RTC. Michael provided the link to the testimony at the Texas Legislature. Michael is working with Ceason Clemens, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), on the United States 75 Technology Lane Illumination Agreements. He briefed the Council on the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) America Conference with 6,000 of our closest technology people from across the Country were here, that is a major policy directive of our staff is to grow Transportation technology within our region. Michael reminded everyone the deadline to get all of the Transportation Alternative Call for Projects Support for submittal is in June and the partnership we have with DART has already occurred. The P3s, Governor of Tennessee has visited our region twice and he now refers to as the Dallas-Fort Worth miracle which is the region's ability to absorb one million people every seven years largely due to the region's dynamically priced managed lanes, public/private partnerships or P3 investments of twenty years ago. The advancement of P3s, State of Tennessee has now passed legislation to bring dynamically priced managed lanes to the metropolitan regions of Tennessee in excess of \$3 billion. Michael mentioned we are hopeful with the correspondence from RTC Chair Duncan Webb to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality regarding Dallas-Fort Worth Ozone Nonattainment and the Section 185 Fee. Michael noted we have a draft final agreement between the City of Dallas and Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) Board regarding the DART Silver Line rail after mediation that occurred. Michael and Ken Kirkpatrick are leading a mediation between Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) and Trinity Railway Express (TRE), trying to obtain BNSF's local share and the BUILD grant we won in double tracking the TRE. The remaining items were not presented.

Members of the RTC discussed Item 4.2 (Policy that restricts third parties from recommending their will on the RTC). A motion was made on Item 4.2 to approve staff to work with interested parties, that are members of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), to formulate a draft for consideration for future meetings. Cara Mendelsohn (M); Adam Bazaldua (S). The motion did not pass.

5. **Project Status Report: Milestone Policy Round 2 and FY2023 Project Tracking:**
Brian Dell requested Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of various updates to Milestone Policy project deadlines and approval of a revised Milestone Policy and Project Tracking reporting frequency. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Milestone Policy focuses on projects funded ten plus years ago that have not gone to construction and creates agency accountability to implement projects. FY2023 Project Tracking focuses on projects slated for implementation in FY2023, highlights potential problems in order to prevent delays, provides earlier monitoring, and enables the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) to take corrective actions to avoid accumulation of carryover balances. For the Milestone Policy projects, ten projects are scheduled for letting in FY2023 with a funding amount of \$95,451,136, and three projects are scheduled for letting in FY2024 and beyond with a funding amount of \$201,816,145, for a total of \$297,267,281. Brian noted to date, seven projects have let by their established deadlines and three have been removed from the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) at the request of the implementing agency. Proposed changes to the MPO Milestone Policy and tracking process were introduced. It was highlighted that quarterly updates have been provided to the Committee and RTC regarding the status of MPO Milestone Policy projects, along with separate updates on the progress of project phases

in the current fiscal year. The process has led to an increase in communication between project sponsors, North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), and Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), but there are few substantive updates to report, due to the reporting frequency and the time a project takes to be implemented. Therefore, staff proposed to adjust the reporting frequency for the Milestone Policy and Project Tracking initiatives from four times a year to at least two times a year. The items will also continue to be combined into one. The summary of TIP FY2023 project funding that has been obligated was presented \$578,507 of Congestion Management and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), \$23,661,006 of Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), and \$1,994,510 of Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TASA), has obligated as of April 14, 2023. Action was requested on several items pertaining to MPO Milestone Policy projects. Several projects on US 81/287 in north Fort Worth (TIP 53029, 53030, 53031, 53032, and 11572) are anticipated to miss their letting deadline at the end of FY2023, and a recommendation was made to extend the deadlines to the end of FY2025 and leave the funding on the projects. Several segments of Corporate Drive in the City of Lewisville (TIP 20108, 20111, 20131 and 20152) are also expected to miss their letting deadlines at the end of FY2023, although one (TIP 20113) is already under construction. Two (TIP 20131 and 20152) are anticipated to let in November 2023 and two (TIP 20108 and 20111) are anticipated to let in April 2024. A recommendation was made to extend the projects' deadlines to match the new let dates and leave the funding on the projects. Additionally, action was requested on the proposal to adjust the reporting frequency for Milestone Policy and Project Tracking Updates from four times a year to at least two times a year. The ability to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and other administrative/planning documents as needed was requested as well. Milestone Policy status updates, along with the latest risk ratings, were included in Electronic Item 5.1. FY2023 Project Tracking status updates were provided in Electronic Item 5.2. Details on the status reports were provided in Electronic Item 5.3.

A motion was made to extend project deadlines for projects on Unites States 81/287 and maintain funding in North Fort Worth and Corporate Drive in Lewisville as recommended, adjust the frequency for Milestone. Policy and Project Tracking updates from four times a year to at least two times a year, and to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program., and other administrative planning documents as needed. Dianne Costa (M); Matthew Porter (S). The motion passed unanimously.

6. **Application to Federal Highway Administration Charging and Fueling Discretionary Grant Infrastructure Program:** Amy Hodges requested Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval to pursue funding from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program (CFI) under the Community Program and Corridor Program grant categories. For FY2022 and FY2023, CFI made available \$700 million split evenly in two funding categories: 1) Community Program (\$350 million available) with minimum: \$500,000 and the maximum: \$15,000,000 and 2) Corridor Program (\$350 million available) with minimum: \$1,000,000 and no maximum. The federal share is up to 80 percent of the total project cost. Eligible entities that contract with a private entity must include that the private entity will be responsible for the non-federal share of the project cost. Applications must be submitted by May 30, 2023. CFI program information is available at: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/cfi/>. The Corridor program is designed to build electric vehicle (EV) charging or alternative fueling infrastructure along designated

Alternative Fuel Corridors (AFC). Staff sees CFI as an opportunity to start deploying recommendations from the Interstate Highway-45 Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Plan including battery electric vehicles for local freight and hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles for long haul freight. North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) opened the 2023 Heavy-Duty Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Call for Partners on March 6, 2023, to establish public-private partnerships between NCTCOG and project teams to scope zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) infrastructure projects and submit an application to the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Corridor Program and other federal and state funding opportunities. NCTCOG received twelve proposals by the deadline of April 7, 2023. Recommendations for the Corridor Program is to coordinate with proposal teams to refine project scopes for a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) proposal: hydrogen refueling near Alliance Texas Mobility Innovation Zone, Southern Dallas County Inland Port, and around the Texas Triangle, up to seven hydrogen refueling stations, estimated to be \$11 million in federal funding per station, and a local freight electric truck depot in Denton, estimated to be \$5 million in federal funding. Eligibility for community programs includes projects designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to expand or fill gaps in access to infrastructure. Because of extensive local government interest in building additional infrastructure, NCTCOG's recommendation and approach for the community program is to apply on behalf of the region for funding to build up to 100 EV charging stations regionwide. At least 50 percent of the stations will be in Justice40 areas and will emphasize the FHWA focus areas. Specialized technical teams will be created to streamline project implementation. The Community Program application will request the maximum award of \$15 million. Staff requests public entities submit letters of support by May 19, 2023. Executive Board authorization to submit proposals will be sought on May 25, 2023. The FHWA application deadline is May 30, 2023. Additional details are presented in Electronic Item 6.

A motion was made to approve of North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) to pursue funding from the Federal Highway Administration Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program for two grant categories: Corridor Program – develop an application to build up to seven hydrogen refueling sites near Alliance Texas Mobility Innovation Zone, Southern Dallas County Inland Port, and around the Texas Triangle. And a local freight Electric Truck Depot in Denton; Community Program – develop an application to build up to 100 electric vehicle charging stations throughout the Region and to demonstrate the effectiveness of specialized technical teams for implementation. Elizabeth Beck (M); Rick Grady (S). The motion passed unanimously.

7. **Federal and State Legislative Update:** Rebekah Gongora briefed the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) on federal and State legislative actions related to transportation and air quality issues affecting the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Transportation issues continue to be a focus for both the United States Congress and the Texas Legislature. Committee hearings – House Transportation and Infrastructure schedule has upcoming hearings on Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization, pipeline safety reauthorization, and the Water Resources Development (WRDA) Act for 2024, Coast Guard Reauthorization. The recent hearing was on supply chain challenges. The Senate environment and Public Work's Fiscal Year 2024 Army Corps of Engineers budget and implementation of the 2022 WRDA Act. The Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation hearing was on railroad safety reform. Dates of Interest for the Texas Legislature: May 8, 2023, was the last day for House committees to report House Bills (HB) and House Joint Resolutions (HJR), May 11 and 12, 2023 was the last day for House

to consider 2nd reading HBs and HJR 3rd reading, May 20, 2023, was the last day for House committees to report Senate Bills (SB) and Senate Joint Resolutions (SJR), May 23 and 24, 2023, was the last day for House to consider 2nd reading for SBs and SJRs 3rd reading, May 28, 2023, was the last day to adopt conference committee reports, and May 29, 2023, corrections only; final day of the 88th Regular Session, and June 18, 2023 will be the last day Governor can sign or veto bills. State's budget plan for House Bill (HB) 1 House approved \$302.6 billion budget on April 6, 2023. Senate appointed conference committee members. Conferees: Huffman (Chair), Nichols, Kolkhorst, Creighton, and Schwertner. HB 1 Senate approved \$308 billion budget on April 17, 2023. House appointed conference committee members; conferees: Bonnen (Chair), Gonzalez of El Paso, Jetton, VanDeaver and Walle. Rebekah provided information on Bills of interest regarding transportation funding proposes an additional \$400 registration fee on most new electric vehicles; \$200 registration renewal fee for all existing electric vehicles to State Highway fund (SB505) was sent to Governor on May 2, 2023. SB 1232 would extend proposition 1 by 8 years passed in Senate and House Committee on May 9, 2023. Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 2 would extend proposition 7 by 10 years passed in Senate and in House Committee, sent to calendars on April 26, 2023. HB 2230 would eliminate the expiration date of Proposition 1, making the revenue stream permanent, passed House and Senate Committee on May 10, 2023. Bills of interest on the topic of safety include SB 1663 authority of a city to alter speed limits passed Senate and House Committee sent to calendars on May 5, 2023. HB 3297 would end the annual vehicle safety inspection program, adds an annual fee, passes House, and scheduled for Senate Committee Hearing on May 11, 2023. Bills of Interest on the topic of temporary tags include HB 718 issuance of metal plates passed House Committee and referred to Senate Committee on May 4, 2023. HB 914 temporary tag tampering penalties passed House and Senate on May 9, 2023. HB 2195 increases penalties for fictitious and altered plates, passed House and Senate Committee on May 10, 2023. HB 3747 prohibits fraudulent temp tags, increases penalties passed House and referred to Senate Committee on May 9, 2023. Bills of interest on the topic of air quality SB 4885 Texas Hydrogen Infrastructure, Vehicle, and Equipment Grant Program under Texas Emission Reduction Plan (TERP) passed House and referred to Senate Committee on May 4, 2023. Bills of interest on the topic of tire disposal include HB 3282 Illegal scrap tire disposal through identification program, authority of a county to impose fines passed House on May 9, 2023. HB 1503 Scrap tire disposal grant program passed House and referred to Senate Committees on May 1, 2023. Bills of interest on the topic of high-speed rail include HB 2357 requires reports on HSR financing, costs, timelines, ridership, routes, foreign investment disclosure. Passed House Committee and set on House Local Calendar on May 12, 2023. Bills of interest on the topic of technology include SB 2144 advanced air mobility technology advisory committee was sent to Governor on May 2, 2023. Bills of interest on the topic of tolling include HB 3843 Texas Department of Transportation study and report on statewide toll facilities. Passed House and referred to Senate Committee on May 10, 2023.

8. **Walk to School Day Promotion 2023:** Shawn Conrad presented for Karla Windsor and provided an overview of activities planned for the 2023 Walk to School Day promotion and information for participation. North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) 2023 Walk to School Day promotional efforts. Walk to School Day is an annual event where students from across the nation walk to school on the same day. Community presence on the streets reminds us to help create calm, safe routes to school for students to walk and bicycle. This year, Walk to School Day is scheduled for October 4, 2023. Statistics show that students that walk or bike to school show up more alert and ready to

learn. The event spotlights the benefits of active transportation to school, as well as the importance of safety on our roadways for our communities. For Walk to School Day 2023, NCTCOG will again provide safety-related prizes and promotional items and a bike raffle to schools to generate excitement and incentivize participation for numerous schools in the region. The Dallas-Fort Worth region accounted for over half of the registered Walk to School Day events in the State of Texas. Staff encouraged everyone to save the date for next year's Walk to School Day: Wednesday, October 4, 2023. Event preparation will begin in Spring 2023. Visit www.WalkBiketoSchool.com for more information about Walk to School Day and how-to guides for starting your own event. Municipalities collaborate with local Independent School Districts and schools in your jurisdiction to hold joint events and raise community awareness. Contact us for assistance in planning your Walk to School Day events. To be added to the Walk to School Day 2023 mailing list, an interest form can be completed at www.nctcog.org/WalkToSchool. Additional information was included in Electronic Item 8.

9. **Regional Scrap Tire Program:** Jenny Narvaez briefly highlighted several items for the Committee regarding challenges for scrap tires: Expensive and inconvenient for citizens to properly dispose of as “Mom & Pop” shops typically lack the resources for proper disposal of large quantities of tires, difficulty with enforcement and prosecution for lack of ordinances and education, illegal dumping on roadways, creeks, private property, rural areas typically experience more illegal dumping than urban areas, and lack of adequate markets. Jenny explained the proper end-of-life tire cycle through Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ's) “Scrap Tire Management Stream from Generator to End-Use Facility” graphic: The cycle starts with the generator of the scrap tire transferring the tire to the transporter, to the tire then either a storage facility or a scrap tire facility, which subsequently would lead to disposal into a landfill, or the tire being used for a recycled or beneficial use. The categories of beneficial uses TCEQ maintains are tire-derived fuel, crumb rubber, recycling, Land Reclamation Projects Using Tires (LRPUT), and other uses. The total number of illegally dumped tires known by the TCEQ has decreased from 14,359,826 in April of 2018 to 12,185,301, as of May 2022. The Air Quality initiative's funding recently approved a total of \$490,000 by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) for use in a regional tire program over the next few years. Part of this funding goes to the continuation of Regional Tire Task Force, an inter-department partnership and external subject-matter expert collaborative group created in December of 2021, to strategize development and implementation to address regional scrap tire management in the 16-county region. A deliverable from the Task Force created the Regional Scrap Tire Model Ordinance, a unified and comprehensive plan with provisions a city and county can adopt and edit. The Model Ordinance was developed using the City of Dallas' updated ordinance as a template, and then edited to incorporate aspects of Houston's ordinance. More information provided via <https://www.nctcog.org/envir/materials-management/regional-tire-task-force>. Sustainable tire recycling is one of 20 policies in the recently adopted Mobility Plan, that cities and counties can voluntarily participate in to receive Transportation Development Credits (TDCs) by developing a plan, ordinance, or policy for transportation refuse recycling, or implement elements of a transportation refuse recycling plan. Current proposed tire legislation: House Bill (HB) 3282 – creates additional requirements for tire transporters and generators, creates fines for not being registered, fines go into account to recycle tires – approved in committee on 4/18/2023. HB 3352 - creates programs for unique scrap tire identification and enforcement for certain counties - approved in committee on 4/18/2023. HB 1503 - tire disposal grant program – on House calendar for April 28, 2023. Senate Bill (SB) 1328 - add illegal storage of scrap tires to the current list of “common nuisances” in current statute and proposes to reduce number of

legally stored scrap tires from 500 to 200 – no action. SB 2126 - authorizes a county to appropriate and spend money on a program to buy back used tires, as part of managing a current solid waste program – no action. Maps and additional information were provided in Electronic Item 9.

10. **Air Quality Ozone: Federal vs. State:** Agenda item requested not to be presented at this time. The agenda item will be presented at a later date.
11. **Fiscal Year 2023 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Program:** Jeff Neal briefed the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) on the Fiscal Year 2023 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Program (MPDG). While the program's Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is expected for release later in "Spring 2023", according to USDOT, information was presented to obtain feedback on candidate projects in the interests of advanced project "slotting". The \$2.85 billion program, based on last year's NOFO, solicits project applications for three funding opportunities: the National Infrastructure Project Assistance Grants Program (MEGA), the Nationally Significant Multimodal Freight and Highway Projects Grant Program (INFRA), and the Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program (Rural). A combined overview of solicited projects; INFRA with \$1.55 billion of available funds with up to 80 percent federal, with no maximum on award size, obligation deadline September 30, 2026, and construction deadline March 30, 2028. MEGA with \$1 billion of available funds with up to 80 percent federal, and United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) seeks projects that will begin construction before September 30, 2026. Rural with \$300 million of available funds with up to 100 percent federal cost/match, no maximum on award size, obligation deadline of September 30, 2026, and construction deadline March 30, 2028. Application deadline for all three projects is July 03, 2023, based on an anticipated NOFO release in late April or early May. As negotiations continue with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), as many as nine submittals can be submitted, with three each for INFRA, MEGA, and RURAL. The projects/lead applicants that are planned for NCTCOG submittal and/or resubmittal include Dallas County Inland Port (DCIP) Multimodal Connectivity Project to rebuild Belt Line Rd and Sunrise Rd. to 4 lane arterials with side paths for better mobility with total cost of \$82,525,000; United States Highway (US) 80 Corridor/Interstate Highway (IH) 635 Junction Reconstruction Project to rebuild US 80 plus IH 635 interchange to address multimodal mobility, safety, and access needs with a total cost of \$482,760,151; Alliance Smart Port Deployment and State Highway (SH) 170 connections deliver comprehensive infrastructure assets with a total cost of \$241,430,000; US 81/287 North Tarrant County Reconstruction project to reconstruct for six general purposes lanes, continuous one-way frontage roads, and new grade separations with a total cost of \$344,400,000; and, US 377 at SH144 reconstruction project in Granbury to rebuild US 377 to a 6-lane limited access roadway with SH 144 upgrades to address safety, mobility, drainage, and multimodal access needs with a total cost of \$90,000,000. Additionally, NCTCOG is considering resubmittal as a co-applicant to TxDOT the IH 30 Downtown Dallas Canyon project to rebuild IH 30 to address design, safety, mobility, deficiencies, restore CBD street grid for multimodal connections and surplus ROW re-use and add deck foundations with a total cost of \$542,000,000. The schedule for the FY23 MPDG program is as follows: brought to RTC as an information item on May 11, 2023, finalize candidate project scope, cost, funding amounts, sources, and phasing schedule details on May 17, 2023, present for action on the May 26, 2023 at the Surface Transportation Technical Committee and June 8, 2023 at the Regional Transportation Council meeting, RTC letter of support deadline is June 15, 2023, Executive Board action at the June 22, 2023, meeting, and the FY2023 MPDG application deadline (Grants.gov) in July of 2023. The schedule is subject to change based on the

program's actual NOFO release date. Remaining details provided in Electronic Item 11.

12. **Progress Reports:** Regional Transportation Council attendance was provided in Electronic Item 12.1 and Surface Transportation Technical Committee attendance in Electronic Item 12.2.
13. **Other Business (Old or New):** There was no discussion on this item.
14. **Future Agenda Items:** There was no discussion on this item.
15. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Regional Transportation Council is scheduled for 1:00 pm, Thursday, June 8, 2023, in the Transportation Council Room of the North Central Texas Council of Governments.

The meeting adjourned at 2:53 p.m.



Regional Broadband Program Updates

Connor Sadro
Technology & Innovation
NCTCOG

6.8.23

March 2022 STTC/RTC Item

TRAVEL DEMAND SUBSTITUTION AND ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS USING TECHNOLOGY: FOUNDATION FOR CLASSIFICATION OF A TRANSPORTATION MODE

AUTONOMOUS MOBILE VEHICLE TO RESIDENTIAL LOCATIONS:

PHASE 1

OPEN PLATFORM INCUBATOR

ACCESS TO BROADBAND:

PHASE 2

RETROFIT AND NEW LOCATION

PILOTS IMPLEMENTED TOGETHER



**Where we
started**



**Where we
are heading**

Broadband as a Mode of Transportation

NCTCOG Vision:

- Mirroring connection in the physical space with connection in the digital space
- Solving inequities with access to resources
 - Education
 - Workforce
 - Healthcare
 - Commerce
- Adding solutions to transportation challenges
 - Travel Demand Management
 - Congestion Management
 - Air Quality
 - Digital Infrastructure

Affordable Connectivity Program

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is a program to increase household internet adoption through a federal subsidy administered by the Federal Communications Commission. This program received \$14.2B through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

Household eligibility criteria:

- Household income below 200% of Federal Poverty Guidelines
- Household currently enrolled in:
 - SNAP, Medicaid, SSI, WIC, Pell Grant, or Free and Reduced-Price School Breakfast or Lunch

Eligible households receive:

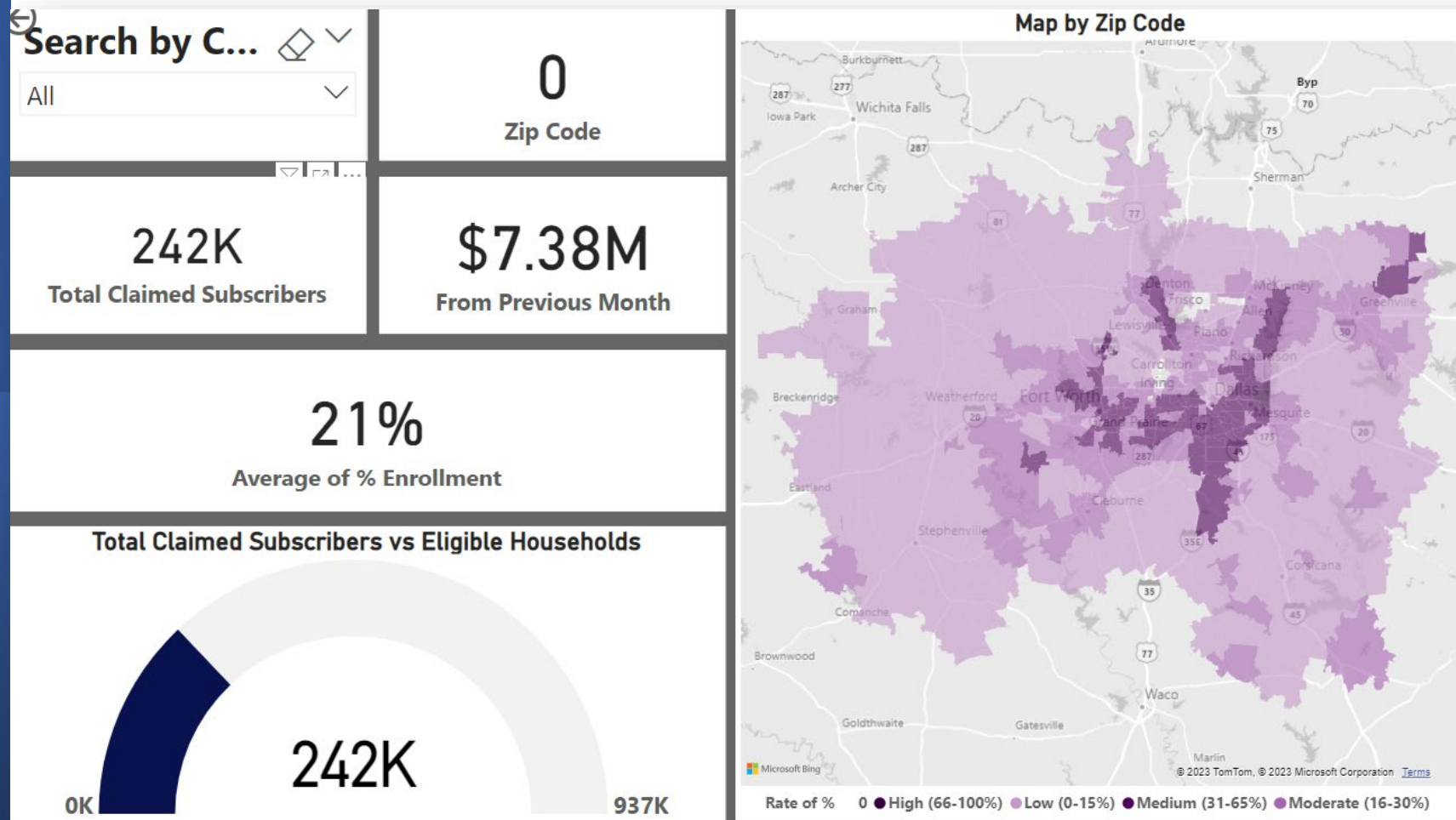
- Up to \$30/month (\$75/month on tribal land) discount on their internet service, including any associated equipment (modem, etc.)
- A one-time discount of up to \$100 for a device to access the internet
- Low-cost service plans may be fully covered through the ACP

North Central Texas ACP Dashboard



<https://www.nctcog.org/trans/plan/vehicles/nctcog-affordable-connectivity-program-dashboard>

North Central Texas ACP Dashboard



Data Methodology:

- USAC ACP Zip Code Enrollment Data (Monthly)
- U.S. Census Bureau ACS Household Income (ZCTA)
- Federal Poverty Level Index (200%)
- U.S. Census Bureau ACS Average Household Size (ZCTA)

Dashboard Tools

Search by C... 

All

 Search

☐ Addison

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Zip Code

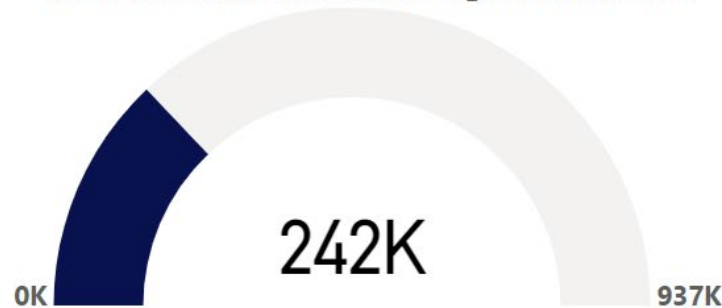
\$7.38M

From Previous Month

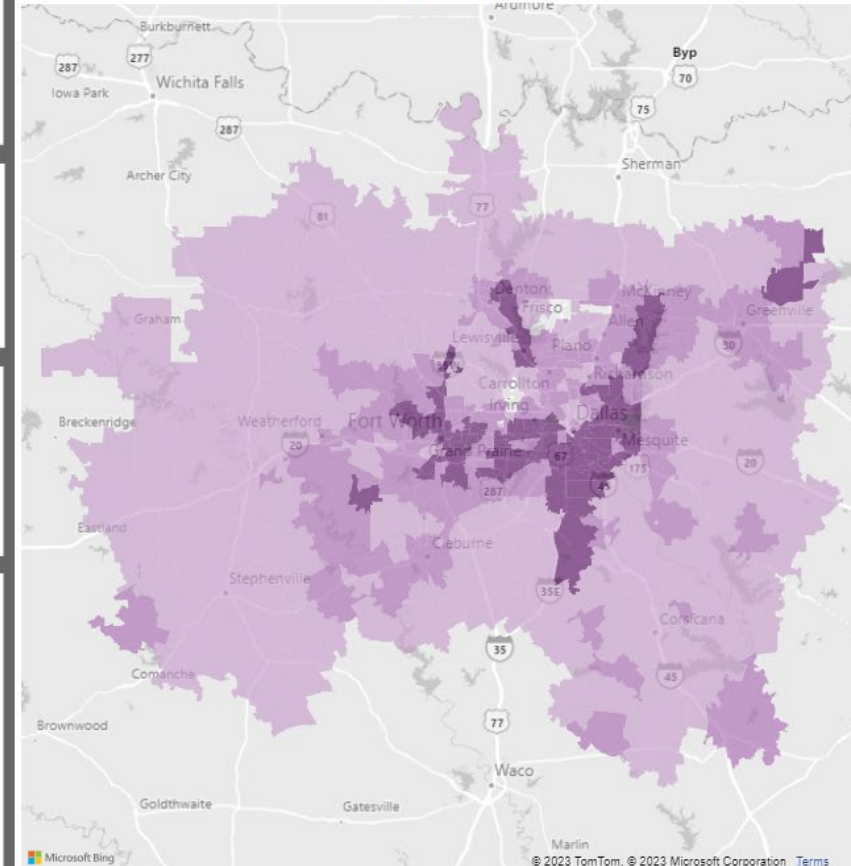
21%

Average of % Enrollment

Total Claimed Subscribers vs Eligible Households

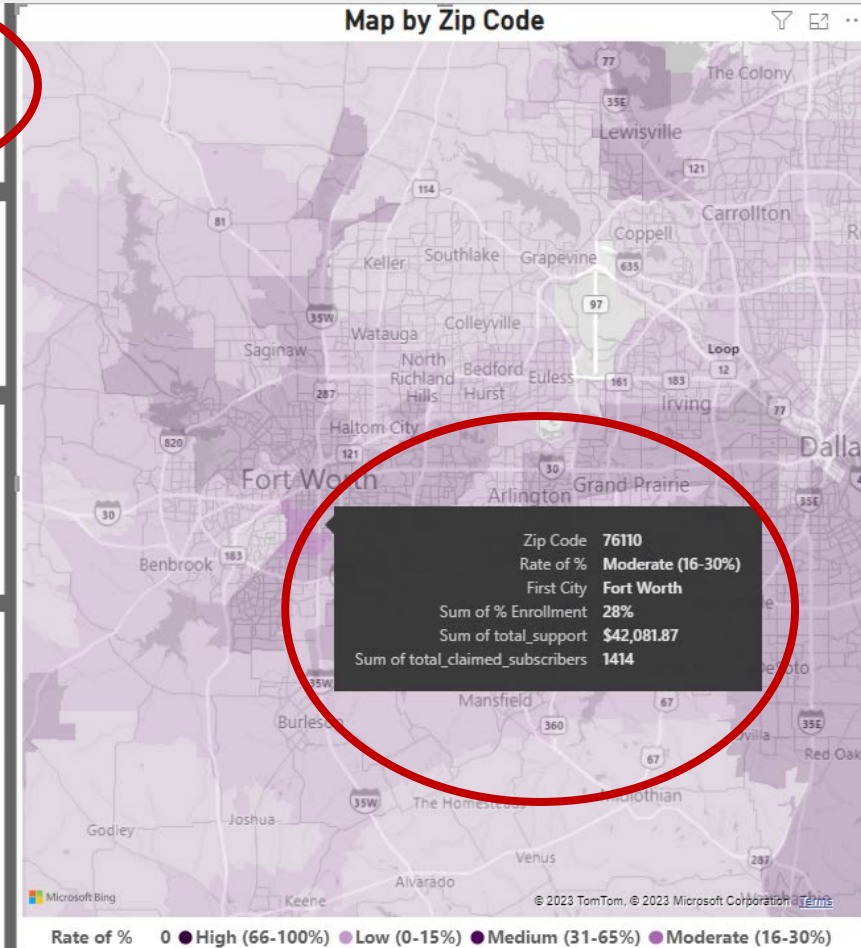
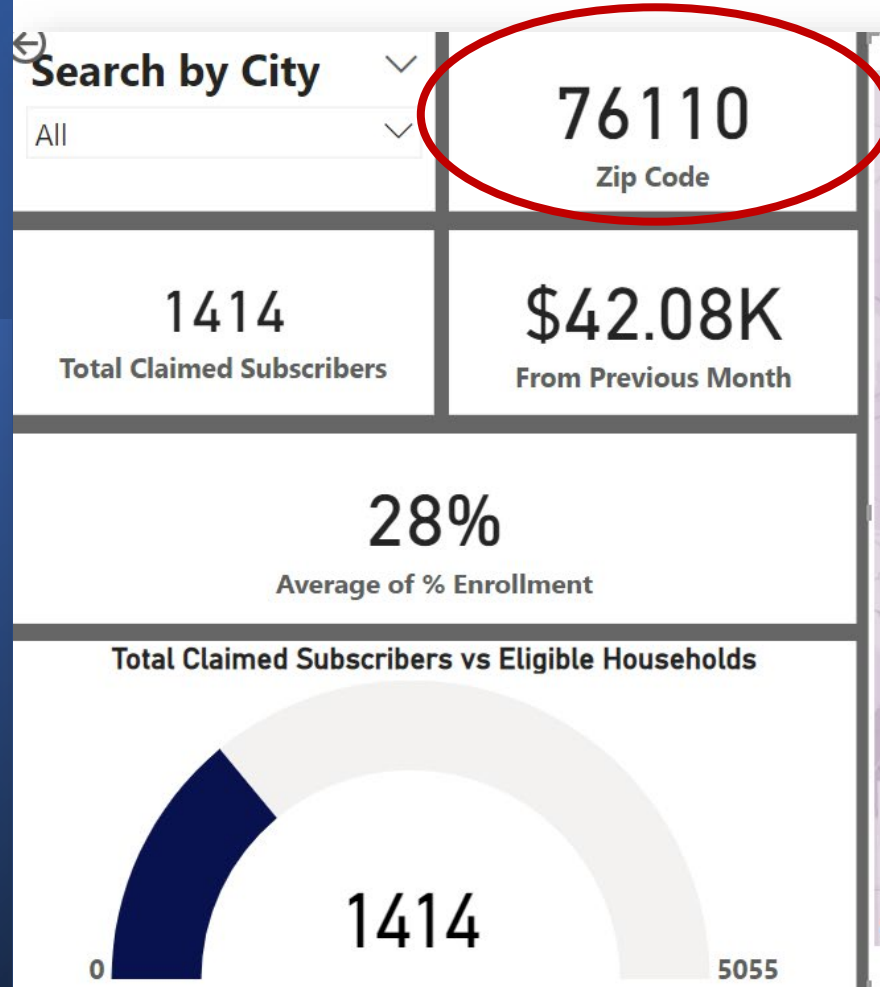


Map by Zip Code

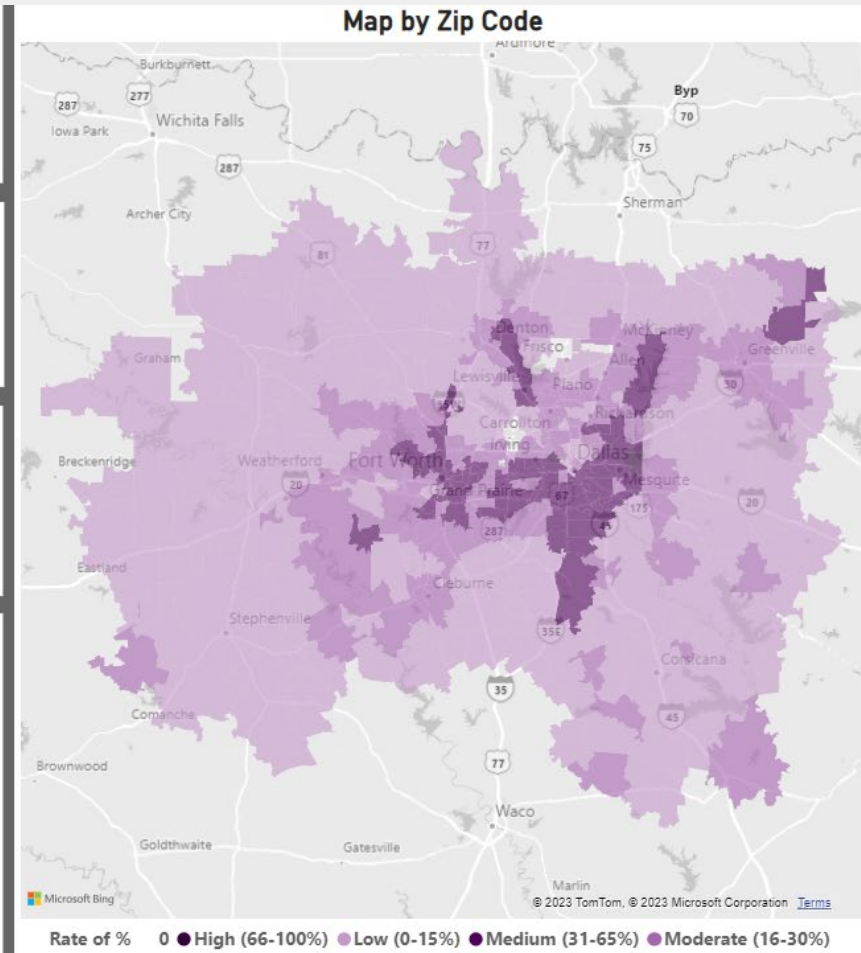
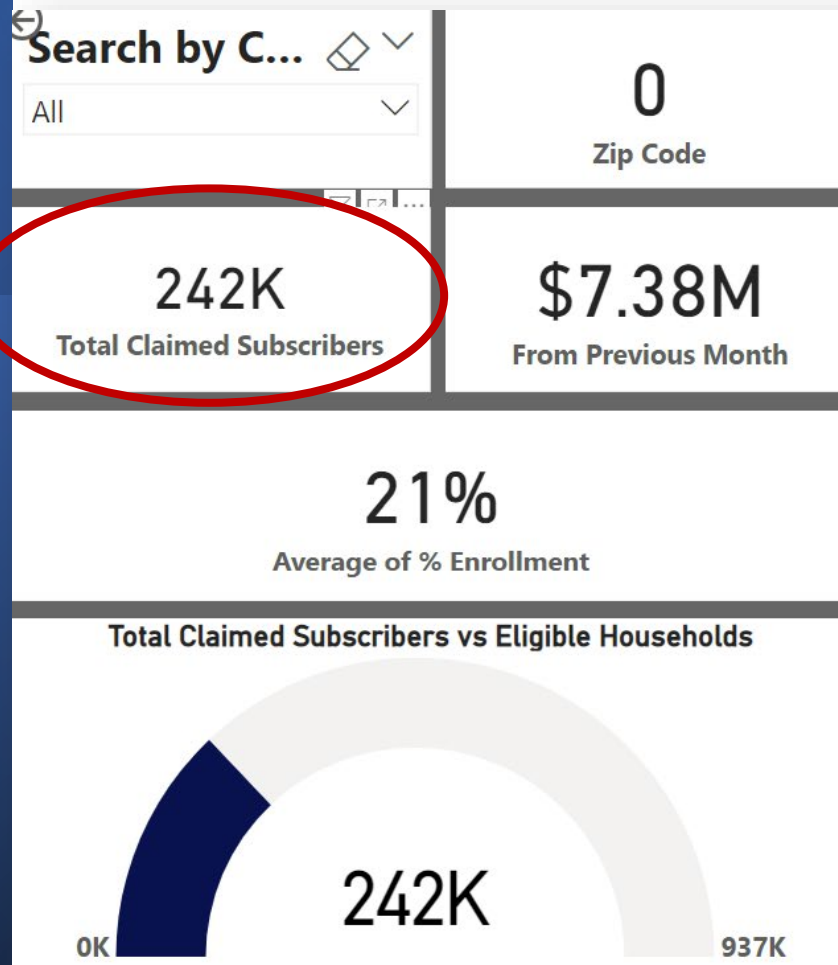


Rate of % 0 ● High (66-100%) ● Low (0-15%) ● Medium (31-65%) ● Moderate (16-30%)

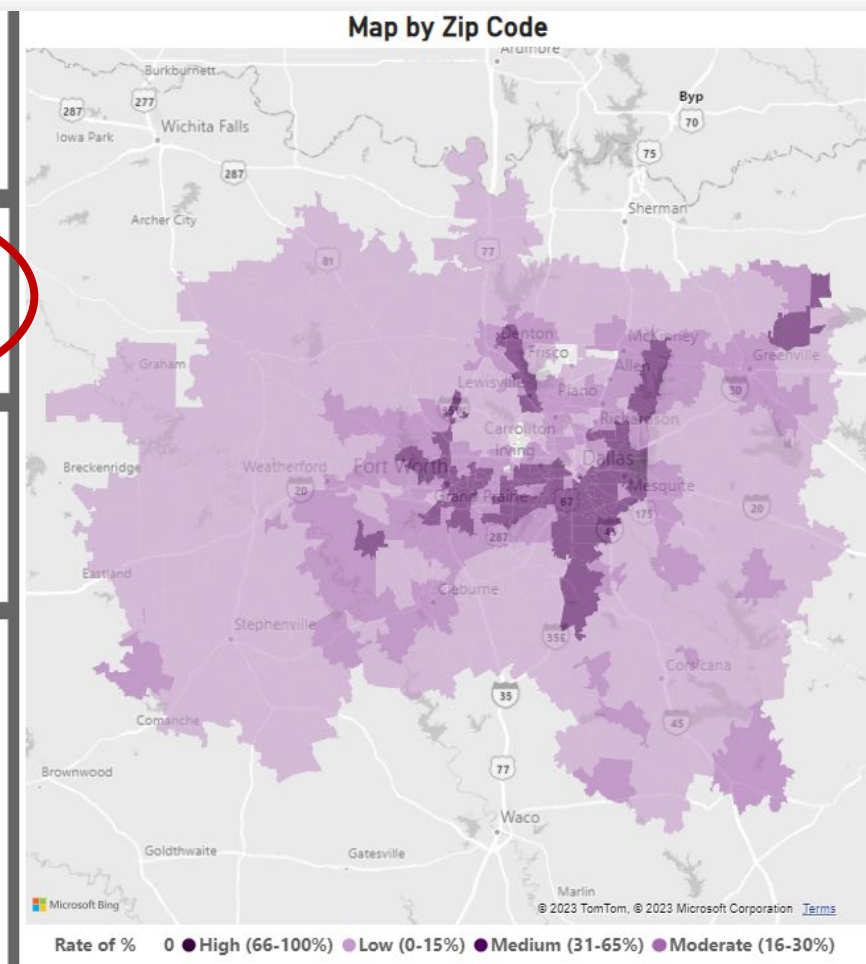
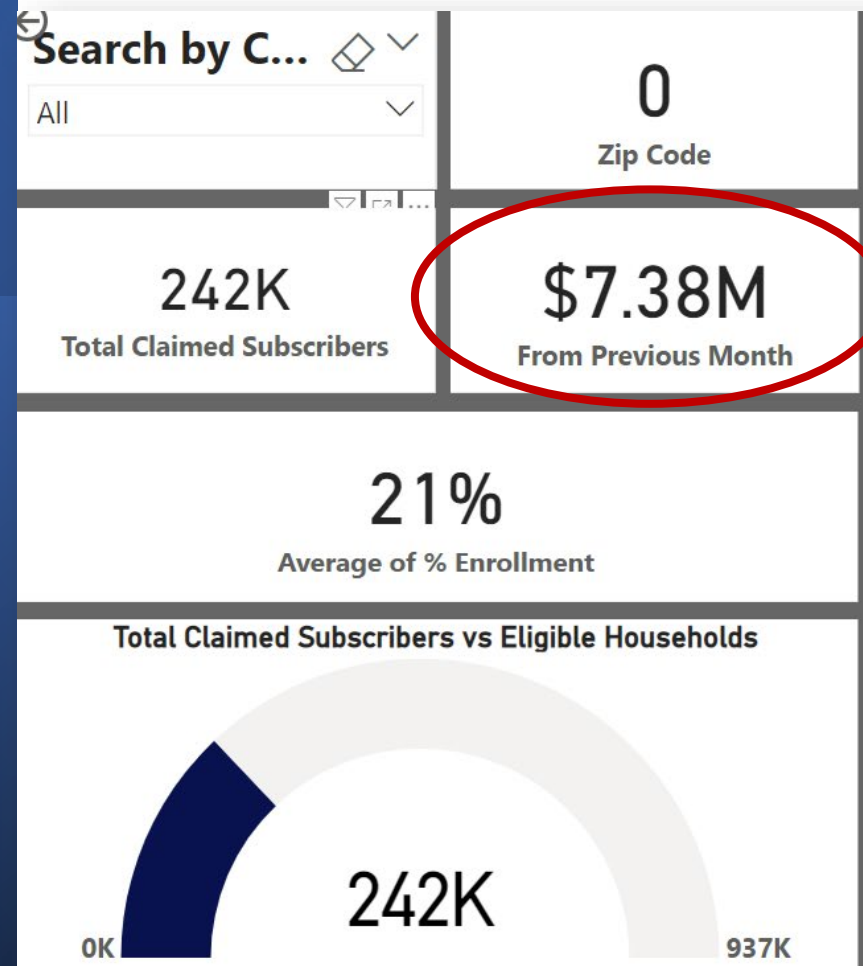
Dashboard Tools



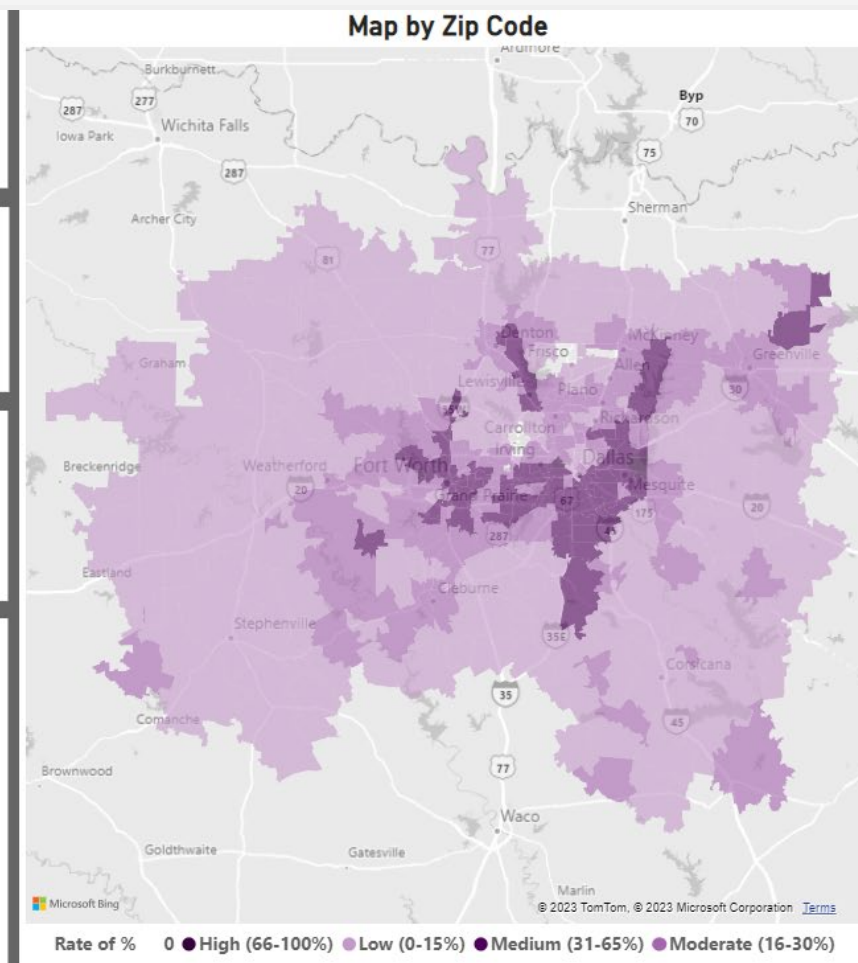
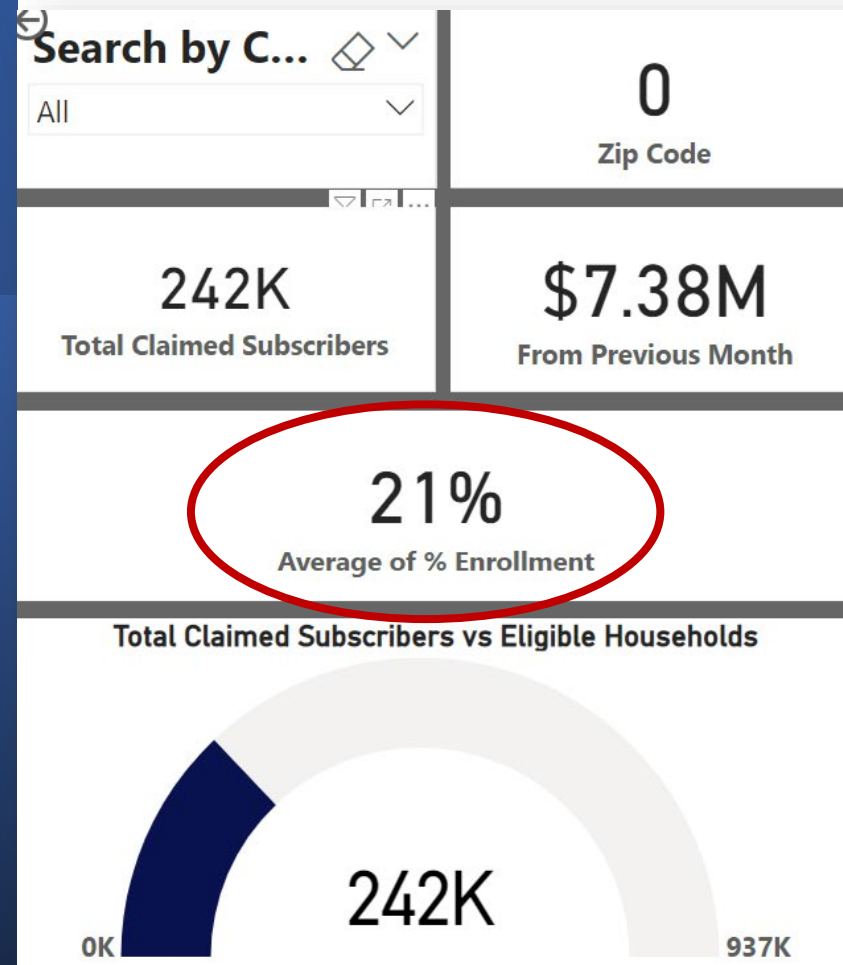
Dashboard Tools



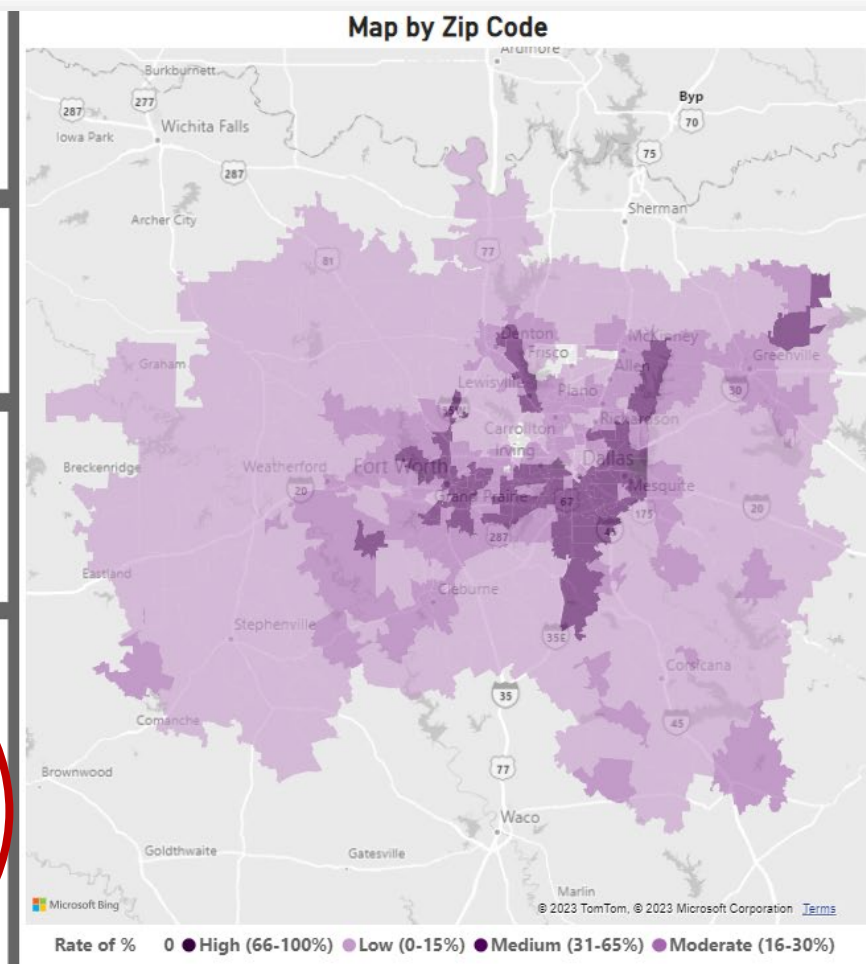
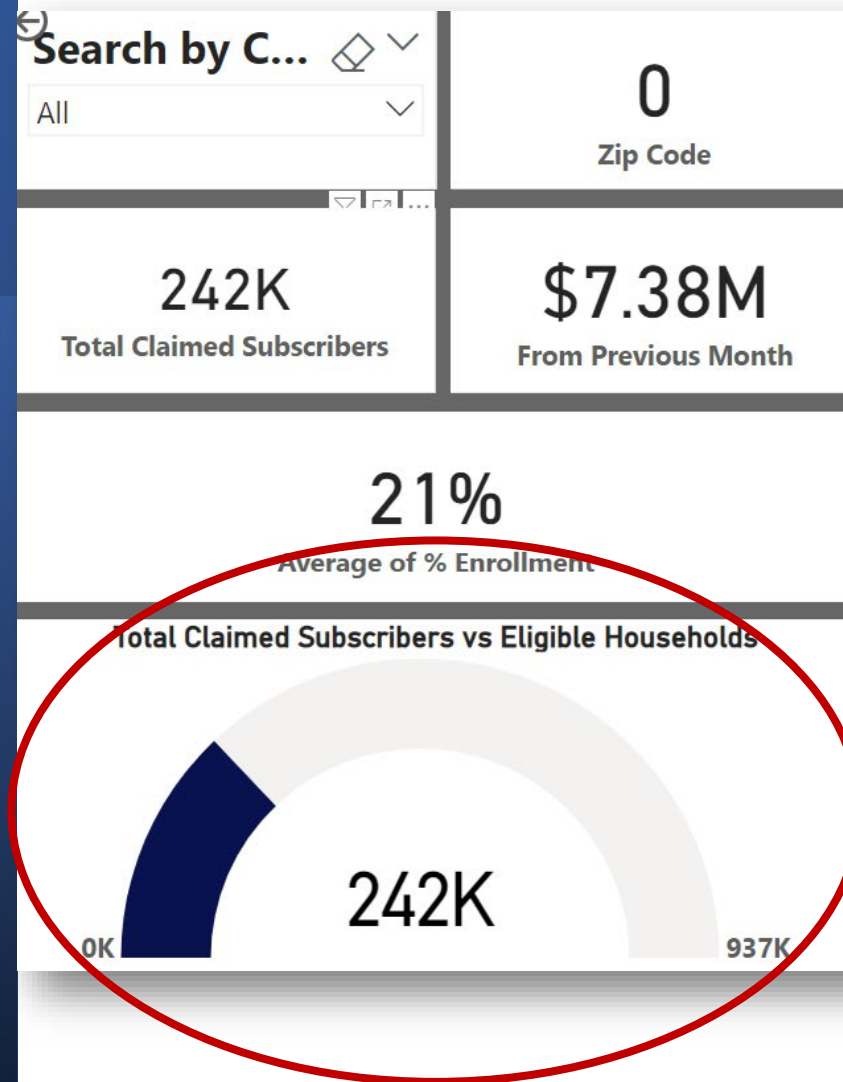
Dashboard Tools



Dashboard Tools



Dashboard Tools



Developments of Interest

DART ACP Involvement



Trip ▾

Guide ▾

Fare ▾

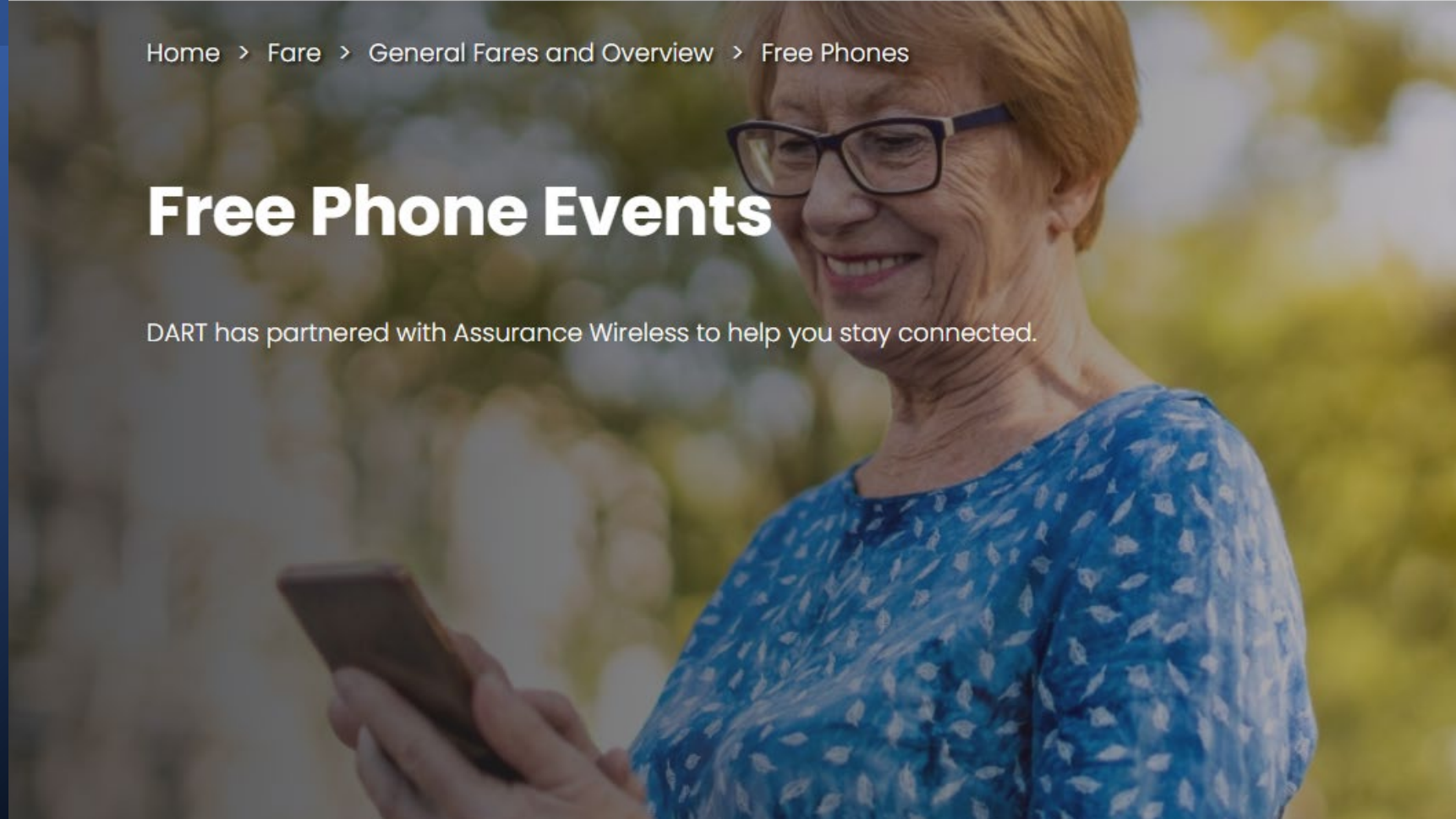
About ▾

Q ▾

[Home](#) > [Fare](#) > [General Fares and Overview](#) > [Free Phones](#)

Free Phone Events

DART has partnered with Assurance Wireless to help you stay connected.



Developments
of Interest

NCTCOG Broadband as Transportation Regional Working Group Registration



Developments of Interest

City of Fort Worth Broadband Pilot Project:

- RTC Approved \$3M for broadband access
 - Fiber Optic infrastructure construction and retrofitting
 - Implementations along Lancaster and Rosedale corridors

Duplicating Efforts in Other Cities:

- Gauging interest to implement a Broadband Pilot Project in your communities

Thank You

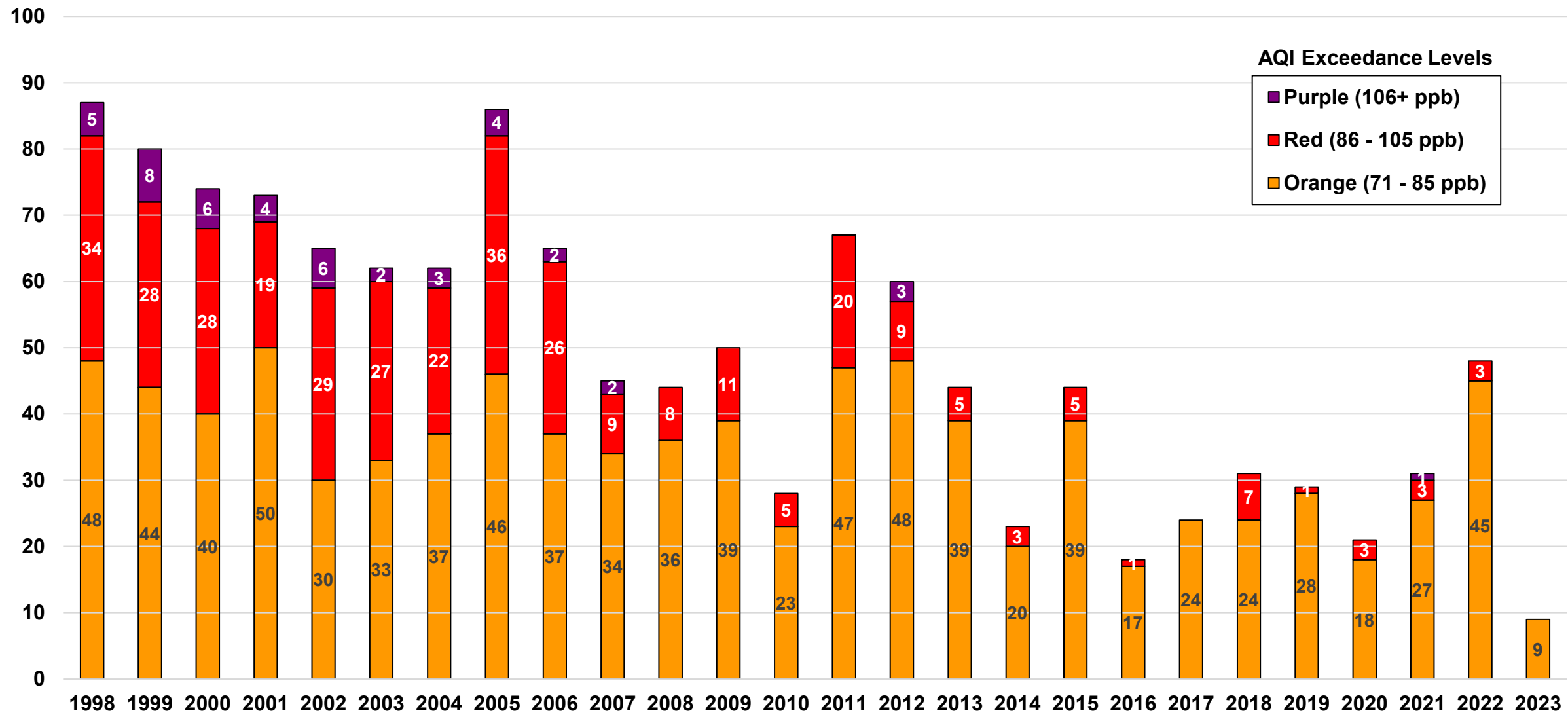
Connor Sadro

Transportation Planner II
Technology & Innovation

csadro@nctcog.org

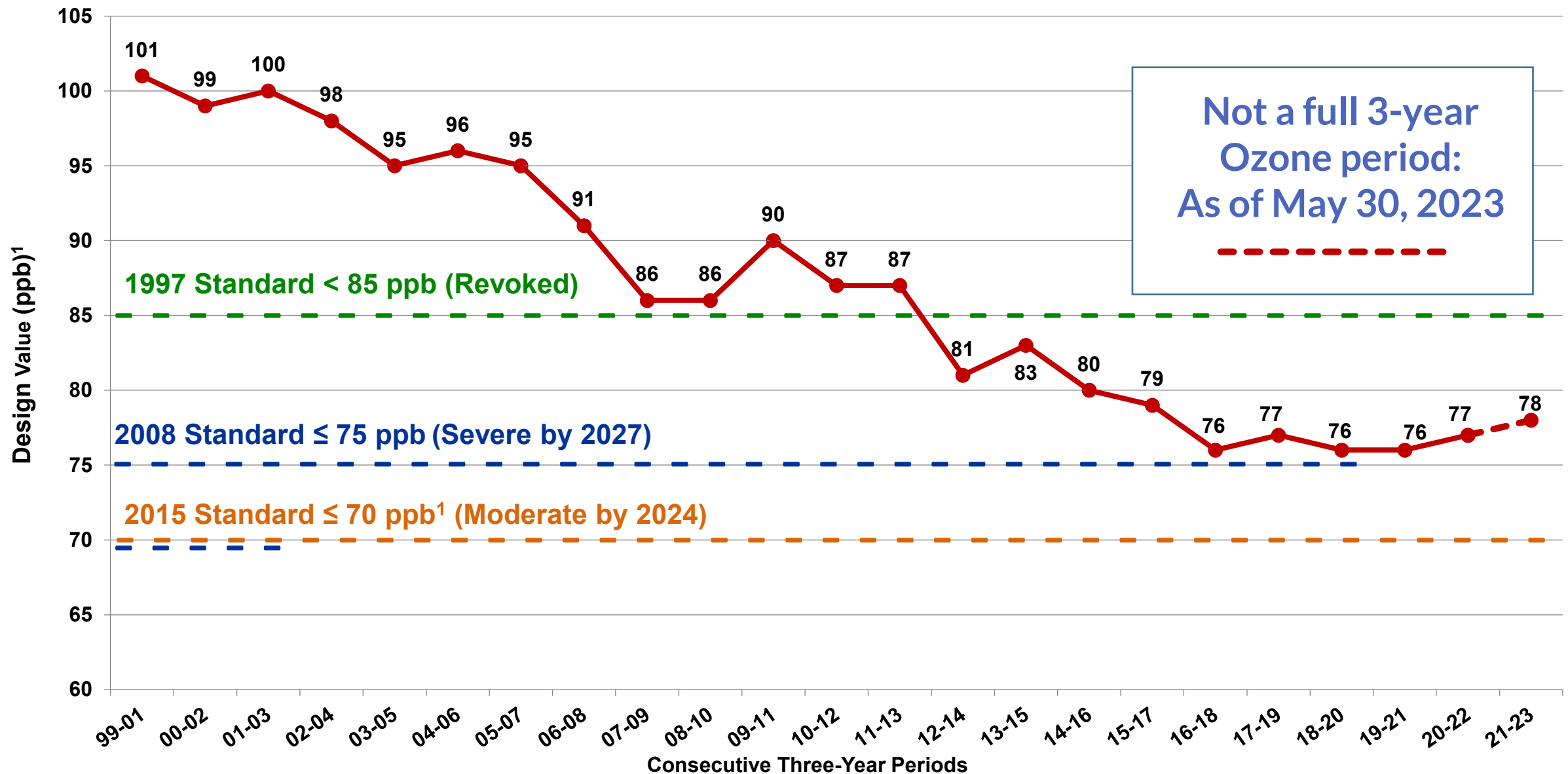
8-HOUR OZONE NAAQS HISTORICAL TRENDS

Based on ≤ 70 ppb (As of May 30, 2023)



Exceedance Level indicates daily maximum eight-hour average ozone concentration.
Exceedance Levels are based on Air Quality Index (AQI) thresholds established by the EPA for the revised ozone standard of 70 ppb.

8-HOUR OZONE NAAQS HISTORICAL TRENDS



¹Attainment Goal - According to the US EPA National Ambient Air Quality Standards, attainment is reached when, at each monitor, the *Design Value* (three-year average of the annual fourth-highest daily maximum eight-hour average ozone concentration) is equal to or less than 70 parts per billion (ppb).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

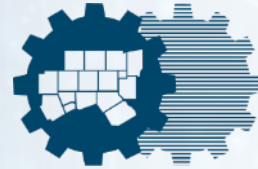
CHRIS KLAUS
Senior Program Manager
cklaus@nctcog.org
817-695-9286

JENNY NARVAEZ
Program Manager
jnarvaez@nctcog.org
817-608-2342

VIVEK THIMMAVAJJHALA
Transportation System Modeler II
vthimmavajjhala@nctcog.org
817-704-2504

NICHOLAS VAN HAASEN
Air Quality Planner III
nvanhaasen@nctcog.org
817-608-2335

<https://www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/air/ozone>



Status Report on Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants

Regional Transportation Council

June 8, 2023

North Central Texas Council of Governments

Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) Background

Created by Section 60114 of the Inflation Reduction Act

Purpose: Develop and implement plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and other harmful air pollutants

Will be administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in two phases:

- Phase 1: \$250 Million Non-Competitive Planning Grants
 - The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) will receive \$1 million from Phase 1 Planning Grants
- Phase 2: \$4.6 Billion in Competitive Implementation Grants

<https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/climate-pollution-reduction-grants>



Recent Updates

Milestone	Completed Date
Surface Transportation Technical Committee Approval	March 24, 2023
Hosted Regional Opportunity for EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Meeting	March 30, 2023
Regional Transportation Council Approval	April 13, 2023
Received Letters of Support from Coordinating Agencies	April 21, 2023
Executive Board Approval	April 27, 2023
Submitted Notice of Intent to Participate to EPA	April 27, 2023
Submitted Final CPRG Application to EPA	May 31, 2023

Additional information available at www.publicinput.com/nctcog-cprg



Next Steps & Upcoming Deadlines

Milestone	Due Date
CPRG Kick-Off Meeting	June 21, 2023
Planning Funds Awarded to Lead Organizations	Summer 2023
Information on Competitive Implementation Grants Released	Summer 2023
Regional Planning Meetings with Local Governments	Summer 2023 - Summer 2025
Deliverable #1: Priority Climate Action Plan	March 1, 2024
Deliverable #2: Comprehensive Climate Action Plan	Summer 2025
Deliverable #3: Final Report	Summer 2027



Contact Us



Savana Nance
Senior Air Quality Planner
snance@nctcog.org



Jenny Narvaez
Program Manager
jnarvaez@nctcog.org



Lori Clark
Program Manager &
DFWCC Director
lclark@nctcog.org

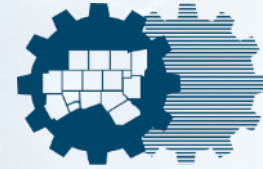


www.PublicInput.com/nctcog-cprg



nctcog-cprg@PublicInput.com





NCTCOG PRESENTATION

Local Clean Air Project Spotlight

Regional Transportation Council

June 8, 2023

North Central Texas Council of Governments

Project Spotlight – Cedar Hill ISD

Awarded Project	Two Propane Powered School Buses
Technology Replaced	Two Diesel Powered School Buses
Project Geographic Area	City of Cedar Hill
Implementation Date	October 2022
Awarded Amount Total Project Cost	\$190,000 \$257,648
Call for Projects	North Central Texas Clean School Bus Program
Funding Source	Supplemental Environmental Projects



Project Spotlight – City of Dallas



Propane School Bus Side Profile



Propane School Bus Badge



Contact Us



Jared Wright
Senior Air Quality Planner
JWright@nctcog.org | 817-608-2374



Amy Hodges
Principal Air Quality Planner
AHodges@nctcog.org | 817-704-2508



TRANSPORTATION

PUBLIC MEETING

JUNE 12 • NOON • 616 SIX FLAGS DR. ARLINGTON, TX 76011

Transit Strategic Partnerships

The Transit Strategic Partnership Program, formally known as Transit Call for Projects, is currently accepting project ideas for the May 2023 cycle. Through this program, staff will review innovative transit projects and solutions both from public agencies looking to directly implement service and those seeking partnership with an existing transit provider. Projects submitted by May 31, 2023 will be reviewed and evaluated for the current cycle.

Automated Transportation System Development Study

NCTCOG's Automated Transportation System (ATS) Initiative is a program to develop ATS networks to move goods and people in urban centers throughout the region. NCTCOG's consulting firm for the program, Lea+Elliott, recently completed a study that identified existing ATS vehicles, developed guidelines for the elevated guideways, and described the present state of technology in the field of dynamic wireless charging. This two-year study was initiated by the RTC, and staff will be presenting the results.

The Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program

NCTCOG is applying for the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG): Planning Grants Program. This program will provide funding to develop a plan on behalf of the Dallas-Fort Worth region to reduce greenhouse gases and other harmful air pollutants. After developing a plan, eligible entities will be able to pursue funding from the EPA for implementation. Staff will provide details on the program, including the application process.

Regional Scrap Tire Program

To help alleviate environmental and public health nuisances, NCTCOG's scrap tire program offers ways to reduce the amount of scrap and abandoned tires within the Dallas-Fort Worth region. The program includes education, outreach, technical and legal support, dump site identification, dumping prevention and enforcement. Staff will provide additional details for public review and comment.

Federal Performance Measures for National Highway System Pavement/Bridge Assets

Federal legislation requires State DOTs to collaborate with MPOs on the recurring evaluation and establishment of condition targets for National Highway System (NHS) pavement and bridge assets, known as PM2 targets. With a new four-year performance period underway, public input is requested on a pending NCTCOG decision to either affirm support for TxDOT's new statewide PM2 targets or establish separate regional PM2 targets. Staff will provide updates on State and regional PM2 estimates, potential effects of new funding and coordination efforts.

FY2024 and FY2025 Unified Planning Work Program

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for regional transportation planning provides a summary of the transportation and related air quality planning efforts to be conducted by NCTCOG as the metropolitan planning organization. Draft recommendations for the FY2024 and FY2025 UPWP will be presented for public review and comment.

ONLINE REVIEW & COMMENT (NO PRESENTATION)

Proposed Modifications to the List of Funded Projects
publicinput.com/nctcogJune23

Modifications to FY2022 and FY2023 Unified Planning Work Program
nctcog.org/upwp

For special accommodations due to a disability or for language interpretation, contact Jackie Castillo at 817-695-9255 or jcastillo@nctcog.org at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. Reasonable accommodations will be made.

Need a ride to the public meeting? Request a \$6 roundtrip ride from the DFW CentrePort Station to NCTCOG with the Via app! Download the app at: arlingtontx.gov/via.

Attend in person, watch the presentations live at publicinput.com/nctcogJune23, or participate via phone by dialing 855-925-2801 then code 2463.



RESOURCES & INFORMATION

Juneteenth Museum Partnership:
publicinput.com/nctcogJune23

Mobility 2045 - 2022 Update:
Administrative Revisions
publicinput.com/nctcogJune23

Interactive Public Input: Map Your Experience:
nctcog.org/mapyourexperience

Vehicle Incentive & Funding Opportunities:
nctcog.org/aqfunding

PUBLIC COMMENTS REPORT

WRITTEN COMMENTS SUBMITTED BY WEBSITE, EMAIL & SOCIAL MEDIA

Purpose

The public comments report is 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 (MPO) and amended on Nov. 10, 2022.

This report is a compilation of general public comments submitted by members of the public from Thursday, Apr. 20 through Friday, May 19. Comments and questions are submitted for the record and can be submitted via Facebook, Twitter, fax, email, online and in person at the monthly RTC meeting.

This month, public comments were received on a number of topics across social media platforms and via email. Comments related to roadways were in the majority.

In addition, comments can be submitted through Map Your Experience, the Transportation Department's online mapping tool. The tool allows users to drop a pin on a location in the region and leave a detailed comment. The tool received two new comments related to bicycle and pedestrian needs. You can view these new comments as well as past comments by visiting <http://nctcoggis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/CrowdsourcingReporter/index.html?appid=b014e6d39b604b3ca329d9094ed1e9e2>.

Bicycle/Pedestrian/Sustainable Development

Instagram –

1. Tomorrow is #biketoworkday! As you plan your trip, here are some tips from LookOutTexans.org. Then share your trip with us tomorrow by tagging @nctcogtrans in your posts! #bikemonth #LookOutTexans #bikesafety #bikedfw 🚲 🏠 🗺️ — nctcogtrans



Too good not to share! 🤗🚲🚲🚲 — Alamoareampo

Will do be doing a similar post for drivers? — gosspl

@gosspl That's a great suggestion! Bike Month takes place through the month of May, so check back soon for a post with tips for driving safely around cyclists. Meanwhile you can find those on LookOutTexans.org — nctcogtrans

Roadways

Twitter –

1. TXDOT wants to hear from you about its long-range transportation planning. Join @TxDOTDallas on May 4 at the @NCTCOGtrans to learn more. — North Dallas Chamber (@NDCC)



2. Repeated claim by @NCTCOGtrans: if I-345 removed, some unknown entity would file Civil Rights Act lawsuit & "only removal faces this issue" Can @DallasTRHT @cleanerair or @PaulQuinn1872 make the same claim against TxDOT so we can end their made-up excuse? — Hexel (@hexel_co)

• Benefits and challenges of IH-345 Feasibility Study options (continued):

Option	Removal/Boulevard
Benefits	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. (25.2) acres of potential surplus ROW for development (most acres of any option).2. Provides 10' shared-use path across cross-streets.3. Removes perceived barrier between communities.
Challenges	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Significant impacts to traffic.2. Eliminates hwy. connection between South and North Dallas.3. *Construction/ROW costs absorbed by the City of Dallas (\$400M-\$1B); need to assume:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Demo of IH-345 and construction of blvd. (pavement, signals, utilities, intersection reconfigurations, etc.).b. ROW purchase from TxDOT and adjacent property owners of cross-streets.c. *Potential DART grade separations (\$100M each; would be dependent upon average daily trips (ADT) of boulevard option).4. Extensive process to remove IH-345 from the state highway system and likely to not be approved.5. *May result in challenges to Title VI (legal issues would be determined by DOJ), which would affect probability of receiving state or federal funding or support.
Process includes steps such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. FHWA and TTC approval to deauthorize IH-345 from the federal highway system.2. Governor and TTC approval to convert IH-345 as surplus land.3. Deauthorizations not originating in the USDOT, must be requested by states and approved by the US Secretary of Transportation.	

*Council Question



Irony is threatening city w/ lawsuit for removing @TxDOT hwy from black/brown neighborhoods... when TxDOT is being sued for building hwy in black/brown neighborhoods by @StopTxDOTi45 & @airallianceHOU Maybe H-Town can show Dallas how it's done? — Hexel (@hexel_co)

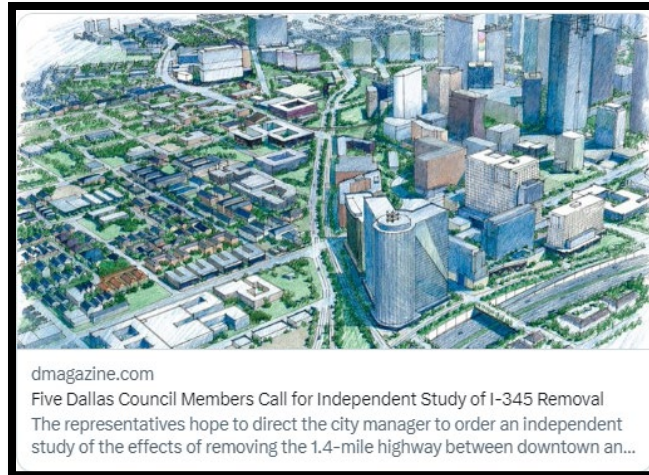
<https://texasappleseed.org/press-releases/civil-rights-complaint-filed-against-txdot-ongoing-discrimination-against-houston>

They always describe lawsuit as matter of fact and exclusive to removal, despite never naming potential plaintiff. Can a real lawyer make sense of this? @PhilipTKingston do they have grounds, or just hot air? Because the tactic seems to be effective at scaring council. — Hexel (@hexel_co)

It's a straight-up lie. I think Morris is losing his marbles. He used to be much smoother — intergovernmental shenanigans (@PhilipTKingston)

Well someone needs to explain that to council tomorrow or before vote next week, because the lie is printed on the official city report and being parroted every chance. I fear that it's working... — Hexel (@hexel_co)

Moreno requested a briefing from city attorneys in executive session on Wednesday to address that claim. One councilman told me it was one of the reasons he wouldn't support the independent study. — Matt Goodman (@goodmoine)

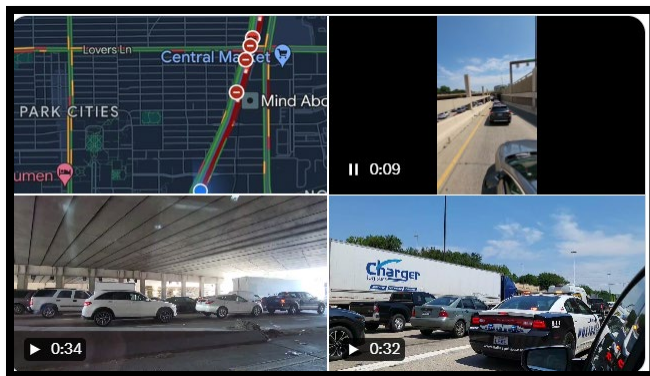


I had to do double take on phrasing & I feel compelled to clarify: @JesseForDallas

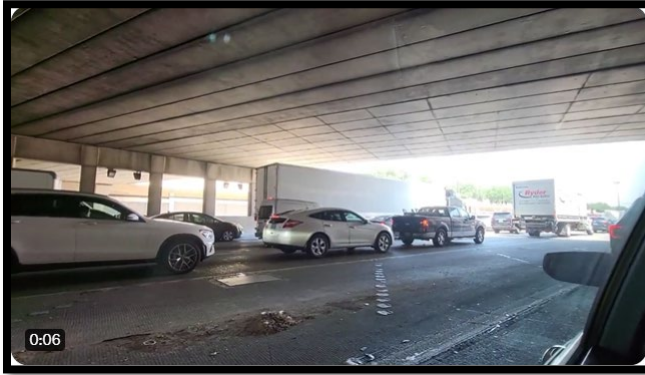
signed memo and supported it in committee yesterday; "one councilman" that didn't support study refers to different person. Jesse has demonstrated improved understanding on IH-345 situation. — Hexel (@hexel_co)

That Council Member is not a serious person. — Downwinders at Risk (@cleanerair)

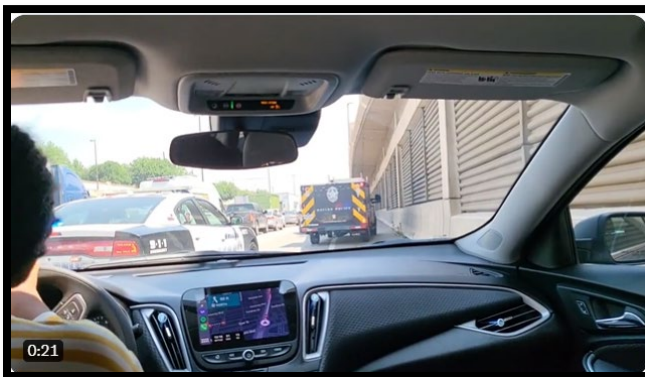
2. (1/x) Made big mistake hailing car to shave few mins of travel: got trapped behind accident NB in @TxDOT US-75 trench, north of I-345. Instead of predictable 40M by DART, got surprise 1H 20M car ride instead. Here's what @NCTCOGtrans @VoteOmarNarvaez needs to understand... 🚗 — Hexel (@hexel_co)



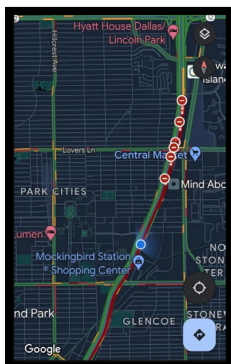
(2/x) This was off-peak. Dallas avg 96 DAILY motor accidents. When it happens on hwy, traffic can stand still for hour or more. Critics claim surface blvd would cause gridlock. But speed \neq resilience; miles of cars in trench can't escape to side street during accident. — Hexel (@hexel_co)



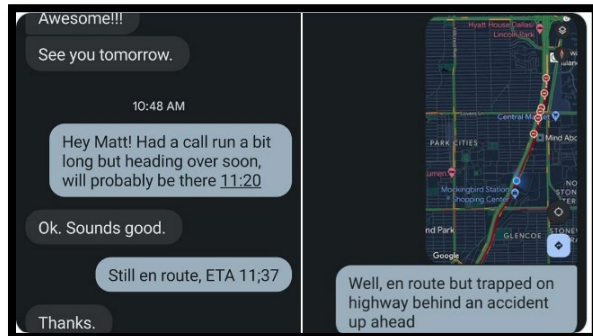
(3/x) Morris claimed emergency responders need highway. This is wrong on 2 counts. Just as cars can't escape to side street, police can't go around either; even less so in trench. W/o highway, there would be less accidents & fatalities to respond to in the first place. — Hexel (@hexel_co)



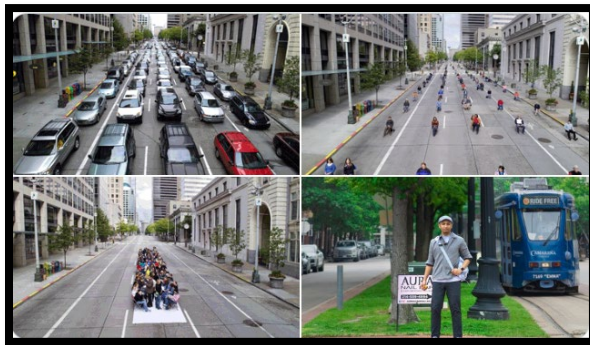
(4/x) I regreted not taking transit today; Mockingbird Station was mocking me just few yards away! As close as I was, I (prob) couldn't safely walk in trench & up ramp. Def can't leave car there if I didn't Lyft. Transit at least has backup options when line is disrupted. — Hexel (@hexel_co)



(5/x) Travel decisions are not made in vacuum. As transit user I still plan around existence of the hwy. If not there, long chain of other decisions would've been different too. Qty of thru lanes may stay same, but TxDOT plan IS highway expansion; dependence only grows w/ time. — Hexel (@hexel_co)



(6/7) Surface blvd will fail if it exclusively serves one mode of movement. Highway can only be used by people in cars; no equity for those who can't drive. Choosing boulevard over highway is trading speed for resilience, accessibility, & safety. — Hexel (@hexel_co)



(7/7) You might think, "those are nice ideas, but we need to decide on real plans!" That's precisely why we need an independent study: one that considers ALL people, including yet not limited to those w/ money, means, ability, and desire to drive a car. — Hexel (@hexel_co)

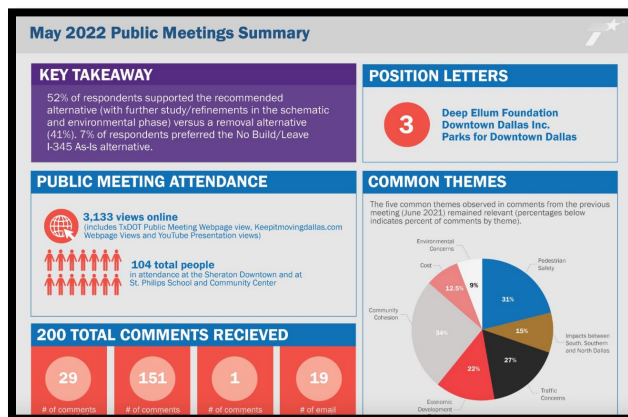


3. Going to do a little tweeting tonight of the 345 meeting... Not very good at this kind of thing but follow along! — Dallas Neighbors for Housing (@NeighborsDTX)



Initial presentation is heavy on the financing aspects from a city perspective, particularly how TxDOT has said that they would not fund any part of removing 345.

TxDOT's Ceason Clemons talking a lot about how they have done extensive public outreach. Notable however that only 52% of respondents supported the hybrid in the most recent round of public comment. The % in support of removal has gone up in every round of public comment.



Michael Morris from NCTCOG mostly focusing on how the RTC and the state of Texas would have to be sign off on removal, something he says would never happen.

DDI and developer Jack Matthews go on record in support of hybrid. Notable to those who are still thinking that those pushing for removal are primarily developers. Maybe that was the case at one point, but it is not now.

General consensus from a lot of stakeholders is that since this is what TxDOT wants, this is what we have to go with because they have so much power over the process.

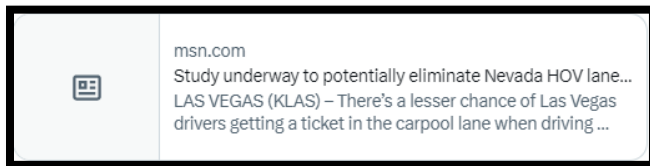
Morris mentions how Jack Matthews is the developer who will build something on top of the I-30 canyon when it's rebuilt. Now makes sense that he's on this panel!

That would be a good question for @TxDOTDallas and @NCTCOGtrans

Toll Roads and Lanes

Twitter –

1. @nevadadot can solve their @HOV challenges, while increasing overall network throughput and improving safety by eliminating manual enforcement. Talk to @NCTCOGtrans about their deployment of @GoCarmaTeam on 120 center lane miles of @TEXpressLanes. — Captain Carpool (@CaptainCarpool)

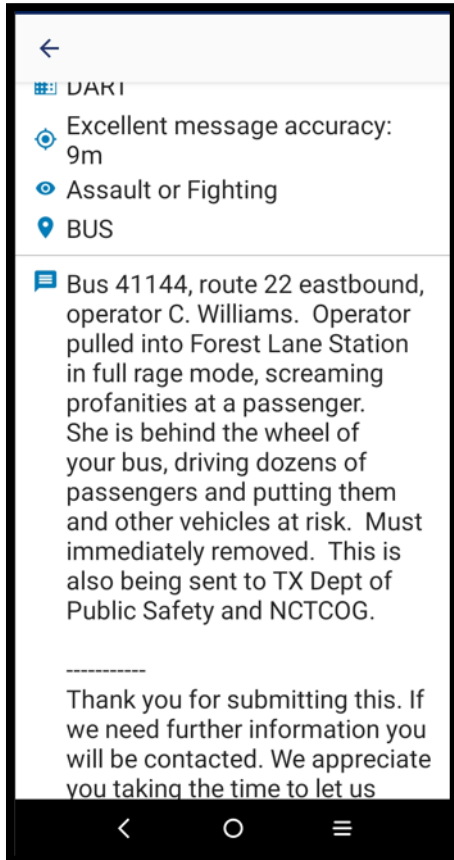


Transit

Email –

1. Zach Middleton

First thank you for your response. I have found the information very helpful. Please see the attached screenshot I just sent DART Police on their app. I need your help making sure they are held accountable for this. Their drivers are putting the public at risk. Any info you can provide will help. I will also be contacting the DPS.



The woman you hear screaming in this video is the DART driver.

Response from NCTCOG Transportation Department:

We are sorry you had this experience. We recommend providing this information through DART's [Contact Us webpage](#), which includes a phone number for their Customer Care Center (214-749-3333). You can also contact their Citizen Advisory Committee (CACInformation@DART.org).

We will forward this information to the pertinent DART staff.

Thank you for contacting the NCTCOG Transportation Department.

May 3, 2022

TO The Transit Team at NCTCOG:

Someone from Southern Nevada sent me this article. Since hot weather is even more extreme in Southern Nevada than it is in North Texas and the duration of the heat is generally longer in Nevada, I thought it would be appropriate to learn from their RIC studies and bus shelter design. Another problem we have with bus shelters in North Texas is that some shelters don't shield waiting passengers from the sun. I also like the enhancement mentioned in this article that the bus shelters provide more lighting at night.

Do you think that we can look at similar designs for bus shelters?

Thank you.

Phyllis Silver

Phyllis Silver

• **LAS VEGAS, NV** – Results from the Heat Island Mapping campaign (<https://www.rtcnv.com/heatmap/>) conducted by the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC), Get Outdoors Nevada, and more than 60 community volunteers support recent transit

improvements, including more frequent service and innovative new shade structures in some of the hottest areas of our valley.

In August 2022 and January 2023, the RTC implemented service changes to improve frequencies and schedules on several routes to reduce wait times for riders, a significant enhancement particularly during the summer months. And just last month, the RTC began installing a new type of "slimline" transit shelter to help mitigate the effects of heat.

Slimline shelters, funded by a \$4 million federal grant, include shading to protect waiting passengers from the sun and provide more lighting at night, creating greater visibility and added security benefits. These shelters have a smaller footprint to accommodate stops that are less than five feet from the roadway while continuing to enable access under the Americans with Disabilities Act. More than 100 slimline shelters will be installed in the valley over the coming year, with more than 80 percent located in and around locations that comprise the hottest 30 percent of the valley. The RTC will also add more than 50 traditional transit shelters throughout the same areas.

"Safety and comfort for passengers and vulnerable road users are top priorities for the RTC, and the results we gathered from the heat mapping project will help us more responsibly plan for the future," said RTC CEO M.J. Maynard. "By better understanding which neighborhoods experience higher temperatures, we can continue to work with local jurisdictions to create initiatives that mitigate heat impacts and reduce the risks of heat-related dangers across our community."

The "Urban Heat Island Mapping Campaign" study found that neighborhoods with the hottest temperatures are largely located in and around downtown Las Vegas, downtown North Las Vegas, the Historic Westside, and the eastern area of the valley. Most of these locations feature large proportions of pavement and buildings but lack dense concentrations of trees. Their lower elevations also result in naturally warmer temperatures than higher elevations elsewhere in the region. While hotter temperatures are generally concentrated in the central and eastern valley, all areas of the region had "hotspots."

Equipped with special sensors mounted to their cars, more than 30 volunteer teams drove pre-mapped routes throughout the valley last summer to collect data. The teams gathered 138,000 temperature and humidity measurements that were used to create detailed maps of the distribution of heat across the valley. The interactive maps, complete project summary and more can be found on the RTC's website (<http://www.rtcnv.com/heatmap>).

Southern Nevada, which has one of the fastest-warming climates in the country, was one of 14 locations (<https://www.noaa.gov/news-release/noaa-and-communities-to-map-heat-inequities-in-14-us-cities-and-counties>) in the chosen to participate in the heat mapping campaign, which was supported by the

Construction(<https://www.rtcnv.com/news/1>)

COVID19(<https://www.rtcnv.com/news/2>)

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Service (<https://www.rtcnv.com/news/54>)

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Local project partners included the Clark County Department of Environment and Sustainability, UNLV School of Public Health, and Get Outdoors Nevada.

SNS (<https://www.southernnevadastrong.org/>)

About the RTC

The RTC is the transit authority, designated metropolitan planning organization, regional traffic management agency and administrator of the Southern Nevada Strong comprehensive regional plan for the Las Vegas valley. The RTC's vision is to advance regionally transformative mobility solutions through equitable, innovative and sustainable infrastructure development. The RTC's mission is to elevate quality of life for residents and visitors through sustainable planning, collaborative problem-solving, and safe and equitable transportation service. For more information about the RTC and its major initiatives or to download its transit app rideRTC, visit [rtcnv.com](https://www.rtcnv.com/) (<https://www.rtcnv.com/>) and stay informed by [subscribing to our blog](https://mailchi.mp/rtcnv/rtc-blog) (<https://mailchi.mp/rtcnv/rtc-blog>).

###

Download: Transit initiatives support heat mapping study results, help protect Southern Nevadans from extreme climate (<https://assets.rtcnv.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2023/04/04110941/New-Transit-Initiatives-Help-Protect-Southern-Nevadans-From-Extreme-Climate.pdf>)

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RECEIVED

May 8, 2023

MAY 17 2023

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Michael Morris
Transportation Director
North Central Texas Council of Governments
616 Six Flags Drive
Arlington, Texas 76011

Dear Mr. Morris:

In late February, staff with the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT's) Financial Management Division sent correspondence to all Texas Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) regarding the Federal Highway Administration's Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding. This correspondence concerned the possible rescission of unobligated balances in certain suballocated MPO programs.

I would like to thank our MPO partners for their efforts to work with TxDOT to ensure federal funding in programs that are suballocated to MPOs is obligated in a timely manner. These efforts help to minimize the risks of a reduction in federal aid funding and authority through rescissions of unobligated balances in our federal programs.

Should your MPO have concerns about its ability to effectively authorize funds in your suballocated programs, it is important that your staff reach out to your local TxDOT District for assistance or our Financial Management Division regarding available balances.

As always, thank you for your work and partnership to ensure the success of Texas' transportation system.

Sincerely,

Marc D. Williams, P.E.
Executive Director

cc: Brian Barth, P.E., Deputy Executive Director for Program Delivery
Brandye Hendrickson, Deputy Executive Director for Planning and Administration
Lance Simmons, P.E., Chief Engineer
Stephen Stewart, Chief Financial Officer

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FORT WORTH REPORT

BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO RACE STREET HASN'T BEEN EASY. HOW BUSINESS OWNERS KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE

By Seth Bodine

Race Street is quiet on a Tuesday afternoon. Quieter than business owners would like.

The city of Fort Worth, along with developers and neighborhood advocates, have been working for years to redevelop the stretch of Race Street that runs from Oakhurst Scenic Drive to E. Belknap Street.

The city has spent \$5.6 million on the area, known as the [Six Points Urban Village](#), along Race Street with bond [funds and federal grants](#).

Those funds went to improving traffic, sidewalks and landscaping in an effort to revitalize the area 2 miles northeast of downtown. The hope was it would become the next [trendy destination in Fort Worth](#).

Now branded as [River East](#) or the [River Arts District](#), the street is lined with several large apartment complexes, local shops and restaurants. Dallas-based Criterion Development Partners bought plots of land and turned it into townhomes and a more than [300,000 square-foot apartment and retail space](#).

But some small businesses have struggled to gain a strong footing. And some owners have closed their doors a few years after opening them.

Two restaurants closed along the street in April. Zonk Burger, a vegan burger restaurant at [2919 Race St.](#) closed April 2. The restaurant was rated in a list of top [vegan restaurants](#) in Culturemap Fort Worth in 2022.

Not far away at 2905 Race St., La Onda, [closed April 17](#). Bon Appétit' named La Onda one of the top 50 best new restaurants in the [country in 2022](#).

The Fort Worth Report counted five vacant spaces along the street. At least one established Fort Worth restaurant plans to open a spinoff on Race Street, hoping to spur more business.

Many business owners along the street say they've seen businesses come and go over the years. Among the reasons include a lack of foot traffic along the street and inconsistent business hours.

Erin Hahn, co-founder of the now-closed Zonk Burger, said other destinations, such as Magnolia Avenue, have an established pattern of foot traffic. Many people eat and then walk elsewhere. That's not the case for Race Street.

"We don't have enough of a critical mass I think on (Race Street) to make it a destination like that," she said.

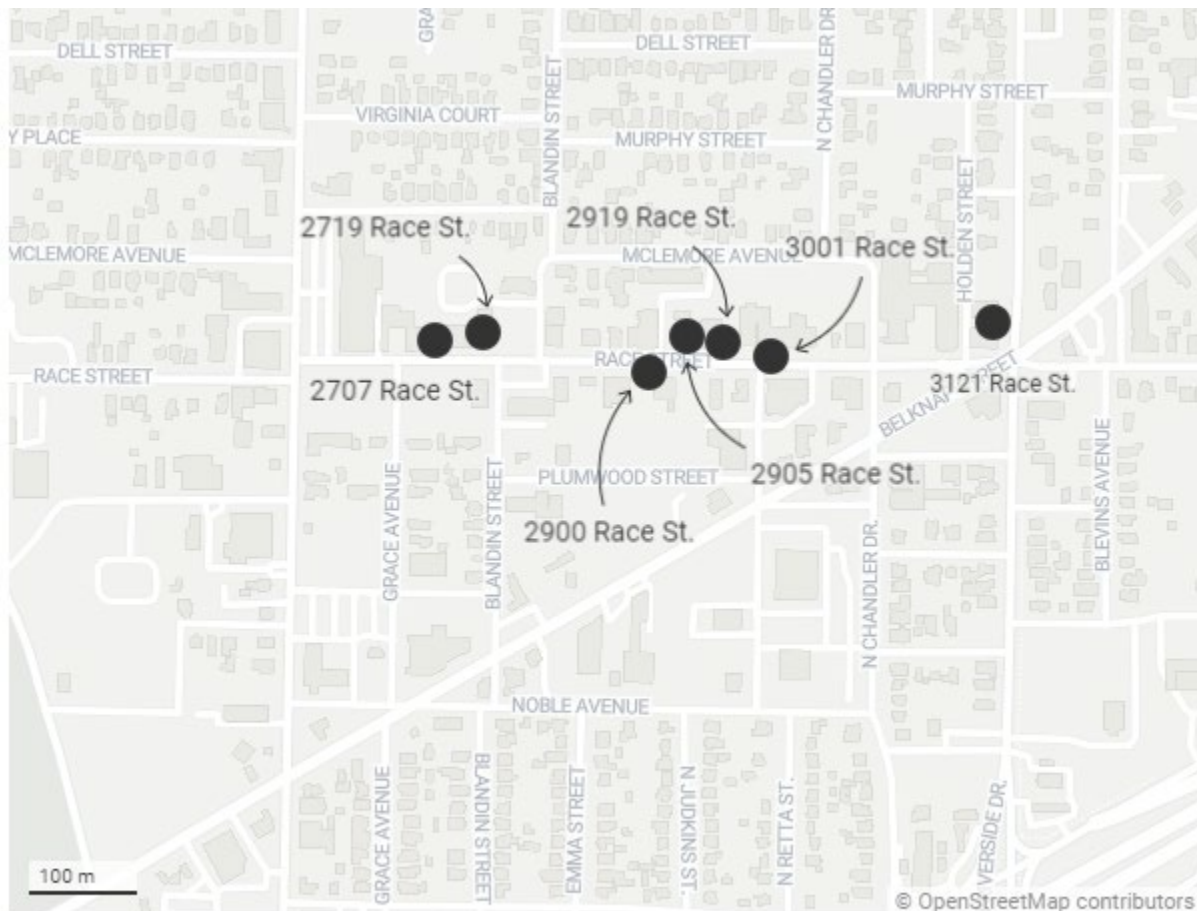
She doesn't think there's more business owners moving in and out of Race Street than

other areas. It's just how retail real estate works, Hahn said. Plus, running a business is risky.

"I think it's just a hard time, even independent of the location," Hahn said.

Vacancies along Race Street

The Fort Worth Report counted five vacancies in buildings along Race Street from both listings and walking the area. Two restaurants have recently closed in the area.



These vacancies were compiled by listings on SVN Trinity Advisers' website and on the ground reporting.

Map: Seth Bodine • Source: [SVN Trinity Advisers](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

"PEOPLE WITH DREAMS COME AND GO"

Running Born Late Records at 2920 Race St. hasn't been easy for owner Henry Vasquez. To get by, he sells records at conventions such as the Dallas Guitar Show and Austin Record Show alongside running his storefront.

Vasquez moved into his store in 2015, and he's seen the street evolve from biker bars and kicked-in windows to renovated streets and new buildings. He's noticed the changes in businesses, too.

"I've seen a million businesses and people with dreams come and go," he said.

Maintaining a business is a full-time job, Vasquez said. One key factor of his success is keeping regular business hours. While many of the businesses along the street are closed on certain days, he keeps his shop open seven days a week from noon to 8 p.m. He passes cards at events and does what he can to promote his business.

"I see the dreams and I see everybody coming in with some sort of game plan," Vasquez said. "I'm like, unless you're willing to tough it out and bite the bullet half the time you're not going to make it."

Linda Wise, owner of Race Street Barber Shop, said there's not a lot of foot traffic. She said she doesn't need it. Wise has been cutting some of her customer's hair for more than 20 years. Wise moved into the location at 2921 Race St. in 2007.

Success along the street depends on the type of business, she said. Another factor to consider, she said, is the street's new design. Wise isn't a fan of the parking spaces, which require drivers to back in.

"I just think that they did a poor job of designing the street," she said.

Wise said her rent at her shop is affordable. When the shop's lease comes up for renewal, she anticipates the price may rise. She might decide to retire once that happens, she said.

'I HAVE TO DO THE WORK TO CREATE A COMMUNITY'

Cecilia Navarro, owner of Creatively Beaut Goods, has been in survival mode since opening her own location in July 2020. Hosting outdoor markets helped her survive the first two years of the pandemic, she said.

"I have to do the work to create community that will repeatedly come back to my events, and workshops or whenever I promote new items on social media," Navarro said. "The building of community in the past few years is what's helped me survive on Race Street."

Navarro works at her business Wednesday through Saturday. As a single mother, having flexible hours is ideal, she said.

Navarro thinks Race Street could benefit from an organization that curates events. The street has some events, but they are organized by individual businesses, she said.

"Sometimes we have to take a step back from doing that community work as a team on Race Street because we have to prioritize our own business first, in order to even continue doing that," Navarro said.

Over the past three years, Navarro said she has seen six to eight businesses close. For the first two years, she lived in the apartment complex at her retail location.

"I'm really grateful that I had the opportunity to live and work here for the first two years to set the foundation to be able to stay and kind of grow roots here," she said. "Without that opportunity, I think I would have been one of those businesses to have gone. I know I would have been one of those businesses."

WHAT'S NEXT FOR RACE STREET?

Some vacant spaces are being filled along the street. The owner of [The Bearded Lady](#) is opening a spinoff restaurant and bar [called Tropic Lady](#) at 2719 Race St., replacing Fuzzy's Taco Shop, which closed.

Laurie Carter, senior adviser at Trinity Advisers, said the restaurant will make the surrounding area more attractive. She has four interested tenants next to Tropic Lady.

"I feel like there's a new sense of energy, coming to ... Race Street," Carter said. "And I feel like once the restaurant gets in, and some of these other spaces get built, it will be more lively down there for sure."

Advocates like Debby Stein, who has worked in the area for years and organizes arts events in the area, believes in Race Street. During an interview with the Fort Worth Report, she wore a "Straight Outta Riverside" button on her shirt.

Soon, Stein is planning to form a nonprofit organization to manage the area and plan projects like placing wayfinding signs.

Revitalizing the area is similar to organizing community theater, Stein said.

"We're the cast members, the tech crew," Stein said. "We're going to make it happen and then we're going to invite the audience."

CITY OF ARLINGTON LEVERAGES TECHNOLOGY AT MORE THAN 100 TRAFFIC SIGNALS TO OPTIMIZE TRAFFIC FLOW FOR HEAVY FREIGHT VEHICLES

By Office of Communication

Posted on Monday, May 01, 2023

The City of Arlington announces a new traffic signal technology system that will help to reduce harmful greenhouse gases, while reducing stops and delays imposed to heavy freight vehicles.

The Freight Optimization Services Program will be deployed on roadways in Arlington designated as freight routes and in freight-oriented development areas.

Paid for by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) through a U.S. Department of Transportation grant, the City is participating at no additional cost to local taxpayers. [Click here to watch a video about this project.](#)

The benefits to our community, which include enhanced road safety, improved quality of life and environmental consciousness, are significant, Public Works Director Keith Brooks said.

The technology being deployed has been proven successfully in transit and emergency vehicle applications across the United States and in several cities in Texas, including San Antonio and Austin.

"The technology works with our traffic management system to provide a few more seconds of green time to allow the heavy vehicle to pass through the intersection without stopping," Brooks said.

Passenger vehicles driving alongside the heavy trucks get the same extended green time, so there are benefits to all vehicles on the main street. The technology deployment also includes information to the truck driver announcing the recommended

travel speed to arrive at a traffic light on green that is currently red. This technology is available today in production vehicles including several Audi and Volkswagen models.

The Freight Priority program, which aligns with the Arlington City Council's priorities to Enhance Regional Mobility and Leverage Technology, will optimize traffic flow through signalized intersections by helping freight vehicles minimize their stops at red lights. This first-of-its kind service based on cloud-computing technology is designed to save money, time and fuel while reducing emissions.

The program is being deployed across 500 traffic signals in multiple jurisdictions throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex including more than 100 in Arlington.

The Freight Priority System also requires no new equipment in the freight vehicles or in the roadway. Data will be fully anonymized in program operations, which means participant information will not be collected or used for any other purpose.

The program will run through 2028 and is expected to expand to more signals in Arlington and throughout the DFW metroplex. If you would like to know more information about the program, or to sign up as a freight operator for no cost, go to freightpriority.com.

- [*Leverage Technology*](#)
- [*Enhance Regional Mobility*](#)

Dallas Morning News

Forest Hill widow facing eviction for I-20 widening gets deadline extension

Watchdog Dave Lieber shares the latest as the 78-year-old, battles TxDOT's lowball relocation offer

By David Lieber

The elderly Forest Hill widow who faced an eviction from her home of 45 years for the [Interstate 20 road widening project](#) caught a break late last week.

TxDOT agreed to extend her eviction date from May 11 to Aug. 11. The extension came on the same day *The Dallas Morning News* Watchdog published a story [about the widow's case](#).

Dora Overton, 78, has battled TxDOT for almost three years. She and her lawyer, Michelle Jones of Denton who is handling her case for free, say TxDOT is lowballing the widow with its offer of relocation money.

The problem is that the money offered her would not give her enough to get a similar house, and getting a mortgage when you're 78 years old isn't easy.

Overton has two problems holding this deal back. The first was that four years ago, she took advantage of a Tarrant County home rehab program that enabled her to get foundation repair, new carpeting and painting. The cost is free as long as she lives in her house for five years.

Since she's being forced out early, she would have to pay, as of today, \$8,000 to erase a related lien.

The other hangup is a second mortgage she and her husband took out 15 years ago. He died a year later, and she makes her \$630 monthly payments. She still owes \$70,000.

"Today I feel a little low because of what I'm facing," Overton told The Watchdog. "I am concerned about getting a loan. I don't think I should have to for the state to take my property."

She added, "Homes have skyrocketed in price."

[The project](#) is part of the \$1.6 billion ["Southeast Connector"](#) Project. The road's proposed right-of-way eventually will cut through what was once her living room.

Several readers have asked The Watchdog how they can help Overton. Send a donation to her lawyer, Michelle Jones, 400 W. Oak St., Denton, TX 76201.

"It's rewarding to see ordinary people want to help her but frustrating that we are struggling to get an additional \$35,000 out of a \$1.6 billion project," Jones said Monday.

TxDOT spokesman Val Lopez III said he would look into the situation and had no further comment.

NBC DFW

Dallas County Proposes a New Information Super Highway

Proposed infrastructure project would help bridge digital divide

By Ken Kalthoff

[Dallas County](#) Commissioners are seeking proposals to build an information superhighway for areas underserved on internet access.

The proposed fiber network would ring around the City of Dallas, which has been pursuing its own high-speed connections for dreams of becoming a “Smart City.”

The Dallas County network would serve smaller cities and unincorporated areas around them.

Dallas is the headquarters for AT&T, one of America’s largest data service providers. Companies compete for customers in Dallas County areas that they choose by market factors. But some places with plenty of people still lacked service for COVID-19 stay-at-home kids learning and parents working.

Dallas County Commissioner John Wiley Price said the county’s request for proposals on new fiber infrastructure should specifically address past inequities that left some areas underserved.

“This RFP should be structured as a best remedy to talk about how we limit, remediate red lining in our communities,” Price said.

The county has \$35 million in federal COVID-19 relief dollars as a start to offer providers that would spend much more to complete the network.

The City of Dallas has been using federal money for similar efforts. The Red Cloud neighborhood of Pleasant Grove is an example. New street lights are equipped with devices that will provide free Wi-Fi service beginning later this month. The lights already operate.

The city added service in other unserved areas and connected fire stations and other public buildings to serve neighborhoods.

Consultants helped Dallas County investigate digital equity issues last fall and the plan that moved forward this week.

County Commissioners said they have other underserved areas to cross the digital divide.

“There are areas in my own district missing a lot of the infrastructure in fiber,” said Dallas County Commissioner Theresa Daniel.

Her District 1 includes Garland, Mesquite, Balch Springs and portions of Northeast Dallas.

Other members said southern Dallas County has the most areas in need.

“We need to be sure that all the underserved areas are our priority,” Commissioner Elba Garcia said.

Price said language in the request may not force providers to serve those areas.

“I just don’t get a comfort level that at the end of the day we’re talking about eviscerating red-lined communities, and that is the design of the legislation and the leveraging of the money,” Price said.

Commissioners voted unanimously Tuesday to issue the request for use of the federal money and promised to see that proposals reach the right places.

[2-18-22-Dallas Countywide broadband - DocumentCloud](#)

<https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/dallas-county-proposes-a-new-information-super-highway/3250205/>

WFAA

DEEP ELLUM LAUNCHING VALET PARKING SERVICE, EXPANDING RIDESHARE 'FLOW ZONE'

Valet parking will begin on May 11 and will be available Thursdays through Sundays.

By Alex Cruz

DALLAS — The Dallas neighborhood of Deep Ellum is looking to make the entertainment district more walkable, safer and accessible as it approaches its peak visitor season.

The [Deep Ellum Foundation](#) on Thursday announced that it will be launching a new valet service and expanding its rideshare "flow zone" to offer more convenience to visitors.

The valet service will begin on May 11 and will be available Thursdays and Fridays from 6 p.m. to 1 a.m. and Saturday and Sundays from 1 p.m. to 1 a.m. The area will be located at 2625 Commerce Street between Twisted Root and DOT's Hop House.

A 50% off promotion for valet service will also be running for a limited time starting on May 11, according to the foundation.



The Deep Ellum Foundation also said the neighborhood's rideshare "flow zone" will be expanding starting on Friday, May 12. The zone was first launched in 2019 and is modeled after DFW Airport's rideshare drop-off and pick-up areas.

A new "flow zone" will be located at 2551 Elm Street, next to Elm & Good and across from Velvet Taco. Other locations are on Good Latimer Expressway, Commerce Street, Malcom X Boulevard, Floyd Street and Swiss Avenue.

The rideshare zones are available on Fridays and Saturday from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m.

The foundation said the Dallas Police Department will also be resuming street closures for pedestrian-only traffic during this peak visitor season.

"The economic and cultural hub, Deep Ellum, is at the center of how the Dallas region's transportation landscape is transforming," Stephanie Keller Hudiburg, executive director of the Deep Ellum Foundation, said in a statement. "Through these neighborhood efforts across modes, Deep Ellum is leading transportation innovation in North Texas and making it more convenient than ever to explore the incomparable district."

[Deep Ellum: Dallas district to launch valet parking service | wfaa.com](https://www.wfaa.com/news/deep-ellum-dallas-district-to-launch-valet-parking-service/2018/07/26/)

DRIVERLESS SEMIS BETWEEN DALLAS AND HOUSTON? AURORA DRIVER CEO EXPLAINS TRUCKING PLANS ALONG I-45

The trucks will soon run on an autonomous driving system. For now, the company is making around 50 trips per week with human safety drivers on board.

By Tom Krisher (AP)

DETROIT — Sometime next year, semis with no human in the cab will start carrying freight down Interstate 45 between Dallas and Houston.

The trucks will run on an autonomous driving system called the Aurora Driver, developed by Pittsburgh-based Aurora Innovation. The company is now making about 50 trips per week with human safety drivers on board.

The prospect of a driverless semi is scary to many, but not to CEO Chris Urmson, who helped to build Google's autonomous vehicle unit. Urmson, 46, co-founded Aurora in 2017.

He spoke with The Associated Press about the future of autonomous vehicles. The interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Q: Aurora has said its driving system is now “feature-complete.” Does that mean you're close to putting trucks on the road without humans inside?

A: Over a year ago, we laid out how we were going to get from there to actually having these trucks on the road with nobody on board as they drove safely, full of goods for people. What it means is that all of the parts of the system are in place. They just don't necessarily work well enough yet that we would trust it to operate without a person on board who was there to deal with rare events. It's this moment where we switch from putting the pieces together to refining and validating the stuff. The next really big deal for us will be this Aurora Driver-ready milestone where we're confident that with a truck that has the appropriate redundancies, that we'd be able to drive that safely down the freeway. From there we're off to the races, starting to see trucks operate without people on them.

Q: Will you test without operators aboard, without carrying freight?

A: I would expect we will. If you're one of our customers, they're going to want to put it through paces a little bit before they put their brand stamp of approval on it. For us to get to the point of operating without that person on board, we want to close our safety case.

Q: To many, the sight of an 80,000-pound semi with no human driver is pretty scary. How would you address those fears?

A: We've used machine learning, artificial intelligence, to teach them how to drive the way that a good human driver does. If you're just observing the truck and you're passing it, you probably don't notice. There are so many opportunities in bringing this technology into freight. While it's an incredibly important job, and it's one where I have a ton of respect to the people who do it, it's a really difficult job. The likelihood of dying as a truck driver on the job is 10 times more than the average American. On many long-haul trips, drivers have to sleep away from home. They don't get to spend time with family. It takes a toll on their quality of life. So there's an incredible

opportunity to make goods move more safely, to make them more efficient and more cost-effective.

Q: Can you control the trucks remotely if needed?

A: When the truck is driving down the road, it needs to be able to to operate safely with or without those remote support people. But there are things that the human mind looks at where it's very easy to understand. Encoding all of those possible things in software is really hard. As we deploy the Aurora Driver, it'll always operate safely, whether that person is there or not. But it can ask for help.

Q: You have said that eventually your trucks are going to hit something. How would you allay fears about that?

A: It's important to recognize that trucks are involved in something like a half million accidents here today. So we expect to reduce that number. These trucks will be sharing the road with people, and people will do unexpected things. We'll do everything we can to make these vehicles are safe. We'll have a level of confidence on the way this thing's going to behave that will be unprecedented.

Q: Teslas on either Autopilot or “Full Self-Driving” using only cameras have crashed into emergency vehicles, motorcycles and other things. Why should we trust you folks when this keeps happening with other vehicles?

A: They aren't really self-driving vehicles. They're kind of being branded in a way that maybe is a little bit misleading. We've believed for a long time that using a combination of laser, radar, cameras — inventing our own even more capable long-range lidar (Light Detection and Ranging) — that increases the robustness of the system. The likelihood that you miss something becomes vanishingly small. You had to think about how the different sensors might fail and how you can use different sensors to complement the weaknesses and augment the strengths of one another so that you can actually be robust in challenging situations.

Aurora self-driving trucks: Q&A with their CEO | wfaa.com

More jobs, amenities could be coming to East Berry Street as city kicks off corridor study

The city is inviting residents to share their input with an online survey.

By Sandra Sadek

Fort Worth is planning a makeover for a 6-mile stretch of the East Berry Street corridor, from Riverside Drive east to Lake Arlington.

Residents are being asked to share their input as the city begins its corridor planning study.

“This isn’t just going to be a pretty visioning plan. This is also going to lead to real construction, land use policy coordination along it, as well as economic development,” said Kelly Porter, assistant director of transportation and public works for the city of Fort Worth.

The study aims to determine how to create “a safe, equitable, inclusive and thriving corridor.”

East Berry is a fast-growing area of Fort Worth, seeing a 20.4% increase in population since 2010.

The first public open house was held on May 4 at the Fort Worth Public Library – East Berry branch. Visitors were able to share feedback on proposed improvements to the area.

Tracy Rolla, one of the attendees at the open house, has lived in the area for 17 years. More businesses along the corridor would be nice, she said.

“I would like to see maybe a nice family restaurant, maybe a movie theater or dine-in restaurants,” Rolla said. “I would like to see maybe a strip mall with stores. Facilities for the youth and seniors. And also jobs. There needs to be businesses all the way across to 820.”

East Berry has long suffered from years of disinvestment. The lack of job opportunities in the area meant more workers were having to commute outside of East Berry instead of keeping their dollars in the community, according to data presented at the open house.

But recent efforts to boost the area – like the construction of [Renaissance Square](#) in southeast Fort Worth — have opened the door for more jobs and economic growth.

“There’s more money coming into the area than leaving it because that was such a big economic boom. So people do have dollars to spend in their community and people will come from outside the community to spend their dollars here,” Porter said.

The study will also examine future land use for the area.

About 70% of East Berry is residential and just 10% is commercial. Mixed-use accounts for around 14% of the land.

Mary Clark has lived in the area for 51 years. While she would like to see more commercial development along East Berry, she is worried that some of the redevelopment would gentrify the area.

“It would be nice to have beautiful sidewalks, restaurants, but people will have to lose their homes to get it,” Clark said.

Other areas of focus in the study include transportation and safety. Using money from the [2022 bond](#) as well as the [East Berry Tax Increment Financing district](#), the city could be adding new sidewalks, trails, and bike lanes, as well as improving intersections and lighting.

Right now, about 62% of the area does not have sidewalks.

The city will be holding a second open house meeting in September. The study and ensuing action plan are expected to be completed and adopted in March 2024.

“We will update the thoroughfare plan based on different elements of the study. So it’s really about action,” Porter said.

NEIGHBORS AND TCU PROFESSORS TEAM UP TO REVITALIZE LONG-NEGLECTED PARK IN FORT WORTH'S HISTORIC SOUTHSIDE

By Haley Samsel

After joining Fort Worth's parks department last summer, parks superintendent Omotayo Ajayi began visiting the dozens of properties under his purview. When he arrived at [Glenwood Park](#) in the Historic Southside neighborhood, he was shocked by the number of unhoused people camping outside.

"When I was inspecting the park, I thought: Did I miss the address?" said Ajayi. "This can't be a park because people were cooking out at a bonfire and had set up camp."

Ajayi knew he had limited resources to offer the park. That's why he believes the [Fort Worth Climate Safe Neighborhood Coalition](#) – made up of Texas Christian University faculty, Historic Southside residents and other community groups – was "heaven sent" to help revitalize the 37-acre park.

The difference between his first experience and the park's current state is palpable to Ajayi, who looked on as TCU student volunteers and University Christian Church members flocked to Glenwood for an Earth Day cleanup April 22. Booths offered environmental activities for kids, public health resources and information on plant life.

[\[map\]](#)

"You don't know how happy I am," Ajayi said. "If you see the pictures from the beginning, you would see how much effort has been involved to bring it to this state. It is community, it is people, it is effort, because people wanted to get involved. It is that passion that built this park."

Members of the Historic Southside Neighborhood Association have pushed for more investment into Glenwood Park [since early 2021](#), according to James Walker, the association's president.

The effort took off that fall, when TCU nursing professors Gina Alexander, Vicki Brooks and Tammie Williams began a partnership with the neighborhood association and the [Kids Environmental Education Network Group](#), which offers educational programming to youth in southeast Fort Worth.

The coalition – which now includes [nonprofit Community Frontline](#), the local chapter of the [Texas Master Naturalists](#) and Tarrant County's public health department – became official in May 2022. Since then, the group has achieved a major goal: convincing city officials to spend \$75,000 on developing a master plan for Glenwood Park.

After holding their first community meeting about the master plan in March, Walker and fellow residents already have some big ideas for the park. They want a splash pad for kids, a new pedestrian bridge, volleyball courts, new basketball hoops, more trash cans and pavilions for community members to gather.

The city has already purchased new playground equipment that will be installed in the next year, Walker said.

“We just raised hell. How can the kids come to this park? This is not a playground,” Walker said. “At the end of the day, we want our park to be one of the parks that says: ‘Hey, we can have a family reunion here, or church event here, or city event here, because the park is so nice.’”

To Alexander, the park upgrades fit into a larger campaign to draw awareness to climate change and how nature-based solutions – such as preserving open space in underserved communities – can improve public health and give people the chance to spend time outdoors.

“What can we do that really is at the intersection of human health benefits, but also protecting and preserving our natural resources?” Alexander said. “These solutions are bipartisan. It doesn’t have to be everybody taking a different stance. We can see where there’s areas of overlap there.”

TCU PARTNERS WITH NEIGHBORHOOD TO TACKLE PARK INEQUITY IN 76104 ZIP CODE

Alexander and Brooks’ [journey to Glenwood Park](#), which sits less than six miles from TCU’s campus, began in 2019. Brooks is a family nurse practitioner, while Alexander’s background is public health. They started thinking about how they could prevent illness by encouraging people to make healthy choices that would reduce their chances of developing disease.

They later created RxPLORE, a program that gives participants a “prescription” of spending more time outdoors and exploring the world around them. In fall 2019, their team gave out 70 prescriptions at the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, nursing students lost access to hospitals to complete their clinical rounds, Alexander said. So, using [a toolkit](#) developed by the Centers for Disease Control [and Prevention](#) and the National Park Service, professors sent students outdoors to conduct assessments of how health is impacted by trail systems and parks in Fort Worth.

Students completed about 50 park audits, which collected data and perspectives on amenities offered in Fort Worth. After presenting their findings to the city’s parks advisory board, Alexander and Brooks determined that Glenwood Park would be a key target for significant investment and support.

“We didn’t want to just leave it at that,” Alexander said.

After reaching out to the neighborhood association and other community organizations, Alexander found that everyone – including the parks department – was “equally concerned” about making the park a destination for people living in the 76104 ZIP code.

The ZIP code has [the lowest life expectancy in Texas](#), according to a 2019 UT-Southwestern study. Over the past three years, nonprofit groups have dedicated significant funding to addressing racial inequalities in the area, according to [previous Fort Worth Report coverage](#).

Ross Haynes Jr., a member of the Historic Southside Neighborhood Association’s economic development team, said the area’s success depends on the four C’s: citizens, the chamber of commerce, contractors – including entities like TCU – and the city.

“It’s like a chain reaction,” Haynes said. “When we put those four C’s together, it helps make for a stronger coalition to get things done. It’s community.”

‘THE COALITION HAS BREATHED LIFE’ INTO GLENWOOD PARK

Walker, who builds and sells homes in the Historic Southside, acknowledged there was pushback from homeless advocates who argued the park cleanup efforts were moving unhoused people out of the area without a long-term solution.

In 2021, a developer proposed a \$2 million mental health facility near Glenwood Park. The plan prompted concern that the area’s unhoused population would be displaced, according to [previous Fort Worth Report coverage](#).

Lauren King, executive director of the [Tarrant County Homeless Coalition](#), said at the time that she understood why business owners don’t want someone sleeping on their front step.

“From our perspective, I will say, if we can get people connected to the services, we can do a lot more for them than if they are not,” King [said in 2021](#). “I see neighborhoods around Fort Worth trying to balance that issue of how do we revitalize our neighborhood and also not displace everyone who’s lived here for generations. I think it’s a hard balance to hit.”

The community is not insensitive to the plight faced by unhoused people, Walker said, but the trash and drug paraphernalia left behind isn’t conducive to what Southside residents want. The park has to be usable for homeowners and businesses, who want to enjoy a “live, work, play” lifestyle, he said.

“Our job is not to, I guess you can say, push them out, but we have to do something different with them because the people in the community that’s paying taxes and paying for this park can’t even utilize it,” Walker said.

Alexander envisions a future where the Fort Worth Climate Safe Neighborhood Coalition takes on challenges in other parks, such as Sycamore Park and Cobb Park, that could be connected with a bike trail. The coalition could also push for expanding the city’s tree canopy and preserving wildscapes in Fort Worth, she said.

For now, though, their focus is on Glenwood Park’s master plan. The coalition’s [next meeting](#) – and final spring event – is set for 3:30 p.m. May 11 at Shamblee Library.

“The coalition has breathed life and hope into a lot of people because it’s everybody working together,” Alexander said. “The burden’s not just on one entity. That’s what a true coalition should be – everybody helping and having some consistency and longevity to that commitment.”

Glenwood Park’s future is bright thanks to the hard work of residents, said Ajayi, the parks superintendent.

“The future is great, because I know that by the time we finish the master plan and money is poured into this park, this is going to be one of the (most) beautiful parks in the city of Fort Worth,” Ajayi said.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT CERTIFIED AS BRONZE INTEGRATED STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM COMMUNITY

By Amberley Shelby, Public Works Department

The City of Arlington Public Works Department was recently certified as a Bronze Integrated Stormwater Management (iSWM) Program Certified Community by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). The certification, which was awarded at the April 11, 2023, City Council meeting, signifies that Arlington has met the iSWM Program's criteria for best practices in stormwater management. The iSWM Program is a regionally recognized cooperative initiative that helps cities and counties achieve their goals in three areas: water quality protection, streambank protection and flood mitigation.

The iSWM Program is a comprehensive approach to managing stormwater that aims to minimize the negative impact of stormwater runoff in the environment and improve water quality. It includes a range of best practices and strategies for managing stormwater, such as implementing regulations that reduce the volume of runoff, improve water quality and encourage the use of site designs that integrate both green and gray infrastructure.

[Click here to learn more about the iSWM Certification Program \(NCTCOG\).](#)

To become certified, Arlington had to complete several steps, including the implementation of stormwater design criteria and ordinances that meet the iSWM Program's Criteria. This criteria includes best management practices for site runoff, post-construction stormwater management and illicit discharge detection and elimination.

Arlington's certification as a Bronze iSWM Certified Community demonstrates its commitment to flood mitigation, environmental stewardship and sustainable development. By becoming a certified iSWM community, the City of Arlington has demonstrated that it upholds these standards in your engineering regulations and development ordinances.

[Click here to learn more about the City's the Stormwater Management programs.](#)

The City of Arlington is now among the list of certified iSWM communities in North Texas, which include the Cities of Celina, Corinth, Denton, Fort Worth, Frisco, Grand Prairie, Irving, Kennedale, and Plano.

During the presentation to City Council, NCTCOG's Casey Cannon recognized Amy Cannon, Public Works Assistant Director and Council Member Andrew Piel, who currently serves as the President of the NCTCOG Executive Board.

To learn more about the Public Works Department's programs and services, [visit the department's website](#).

THE CITY COUNCIL IS SET TO VOTE ON I-345'S FUTURE THIS MONTH

The City Council will vote on whether to support a plan to trench the presently elevated highway by the end of this month. The proceedings begin on Monday with a public panel.

By Matt Goodman

On May 24, the Dallas City Council is set to give a thumbs up or down to the Texas Department of Transportation's [plan](#) to remove and trench the 1.4-mile highway I-345 between downtown and Deep Ellum.

It will be the culmination of three weeks of events and years of planning. A panel discussion between city staff and stakeholders will be held this evening, May 8, at City Hall in the council chambers. (That runs from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.) The item will be briefed before the Council's Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on May 15, which will precede a City Council briefing on May 17 and a formal vote one week later.

The resolution is an important step for TxDOT. Its bosses who serve on the Texas Transportation Commission prioritize funding for projects that have support from the cities in which these projects are located. The state's priority for I-345, which is presently elevated, would plunge 10 lanes into a 65-foot-deep trench. Existing streets would fly over the roadway, and the city would be able to pay for capped bridges upon which parks or buildings could be installed once design and engineering work is complete.

The other major option is removing the highway, replacing it with a boulevard, and reconstituting the surrounding street grid to accommodate traffic. But the state has declared removal a non-starter because of the congestion predicted by traffic models. Too, Gov. Greg Abbott has said that his priority is adding to highway capacity. That message means it is unlikely that the Texas Transportation Commission funds any projects that remove vehicle capacity from state-owned thoroughfares. The state already [renege](#)d on an agreement to hand over a highway to the city of San Antonio.

Until the governor's edict changes, any radical revisioning of highways in Texas are unlikely to receive support from the state.

TxDOT presents its trench as a sort of compromise between the two ideas, dropping the highway below ground and reconnecting existing streets on either side of it similar to Central Expressway. But it will cost at least \$1 billion, the state won't fund the decking for development, and it will require years of construction and disruption.

There are still questions among some on the City Council and in the development world. The Dallas branch of the American Institute of Architects sent Mayor Eric Johnson a letter last month recommending "further review of what should be a generational infrastructure investment."

It criticizes the width of the project: "the highway trench appears to be over 180 ft wide, more expansive than the width of a football field." The 10 lanes of the highway, some of which feature multi-level lanes directing drivers to points north and south, will "[divide] the downtown and eastern neighborhoods even further," their letter reads. It criticizes TxDOT's plan to shoot

elevated lanes over Ross Avenue, “obscuring the approach from east Dallas into the Arts District.”

Meanwhile, the AIA letter read, “the pedestrian experience across the highway trench is marginalized, uncomfortable, and treacherous.”

The letter uses the state’s digital visualization of the plan. There will be more engineering to come, and Ceason Clemens, TxDOT’s district engineer, has promised the City Council that each street over the highway will incorporate pedestrian infrastructure that meets the city’s requirements. It will still contain an enormous spread of concrete and vehicles near Dallas’ urban core.

These questions are hanging over the proceedings, and will likely be addressed during Monday’s panel. Some Council members have tried to force the matter prior to the resolution vote. On April 10, five Council members used a process known as a five-signature memo to create an agenda item that would direct the city manager [to commission and fund an independent study](#) into the plans for the highway. That study would explore things beyond moving cars, instead researching potential for economic development, housing, and other adjacent impacts if the highway were to be removed.

The five who signed that memo don’t necessarily support removal, but say they haven’t received enough information about the impact of the trenching plan to offer their support to the state.

That item must be briefed in committee before it is presented to council. And time is ticking. Catherine Cuellar, a city spokeswoman, says discussion of the memo will happen during the May 15 meeting of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Part of that discussion “will likely be” whether to present the matter to the full Council for a vote.

The reason this matters: If a majority of the Council directs the city manager to commission an independent study, that will likely require the resolution vote to be delayed. If Council votes in favor of a resolution in support of the trenching, the study will be for naught.

If TxDOT receives its resolution in support, it will move forward with planning and requesting funding for the trenching project. City staff and the state are clearly ready for a final vote.

Monday’s public panel at City Hall will allow the city, state, and other stakeholders to “share details of and ask questions about” TxDOT’s work that informed its preference to put the highway below grade. It’s from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the Council chambers at City Hall. Here’s the lineup, according to Cuellar:

City of Dallas

- Assistant City Manager Dr. Robert Perez, who is over public works.
- Transportation Director Gus Khankarli.
- Planning & Urban Design Director Julia Ryan.
- Economic Development Assistant Director Kevin Spath.
- Housing & Neighborhood Revitalization Director David Noguera.
- A yet-to-be-determined Park & Recreation staffer.

Partners

- North Central Texas Council of Governments Transportation Director Michael Morris
- DART Project Manager for Capital Planning Kay Shelton.
- Deep Ellum Foundation Director Stephanie Hudiburg.
- Urban planner and DART Board Member Patrick Kennedy.
- Developer Jack Matthews, CEO of Matthews Southwest.
- Developer Terrence Maiden, CEO of Russell Glen.

AIRPORT EXPANSION GROUNDED BY MCKINNEY VOTERS

By Shelbie Hamilton

Updated May 6 at 11:15 p.m.

A majority of McKinney voters cast their ballot against a \$200 million proposition to fund an expansion at McKinney National Airport, according to unofficial election results from Collin County.

Voters against the bond represent 58.69% of votes cast, totaling 12,822. The number of votes in favor of the proposition totaled 9,024, or 41.31%.

McKinney Mayor George Fuller said he is disappointed in the results.

“The voters spoke on how they feel about a general obligation bond,” McKinney Mayor George Fuller said. “I feel like it’s a missed opportunity for the city but we will look at different paths forward for the airport.”

The measure ended up on the ballot after city officials [convened a bond committee](#) in late September to consider the total \$300 million expansion. The [proposed expansion](#) included plans for a 144,000-square-foot commercial passenger terminal with four gates, 2,000 parking spaces, dining, retail and enhanced passenger experience amenities.

Results are unofficial until they are canvassed. Visit www.communityimpact.com/voter-guide/election-results to see results from all local elections in your community.

Updated May 6 at 10:12 p.m.

The gap continues to widen as votes roll in, with nearly 59% of McKinney voters not in favor of the proposed airport expansion.

Voters against the expansion totaled 12,421 with 57 of 62 voting centers reporting in Collin County. Unofficial results show 8,734 votes were cast in favor of the expansion, representing 41.29% of voters.

Updated May 6 at 9:40 p.m.

The number of McKinney voters against the proposed expansion of McKinney National Airport has surpassed 10,000, according to unofficial election results from Collin County.

The total of McKinney voters against the \$200 million ballot proposition for the airport expansion was 10,835, or 58.14% of voters. Voters in favor of the expansion totaled 7,801, or 41.86%, with 35 of 62 voting centers reporting.

Updated May 6 at 8:45 p.m.

McKinney voters may not approve a \$200 million ballot proposition for the [expansion of McKinney National Airport](#) to include commercial passenger service, according to unofficial partial results of the May 6 election.

Unofficial results show 57.55% of voters, or 9,605 votes, were against the measure, and 42.45%, or 7,086 votes, were for it.

The measure ended up on the ballot after city officials [convened a bond committee](#) in late September to consider the total \$300 million expansion. The [proposed expansion](#) would include a 144,000-square-foot commercial passenger terminal with four gates, with room to grow to 16 gates, 2,000 parking spaces, dining, retail and enhanced passenger experience amenities.

Estimates included in an economic impact study completed for the project indicated the output for the first year of operations once the terminal opens could range between \$600 million-\$850 million, according to city documents. The project, if approved by voters, could be operational as soon as 2026..”

'THE NEW FRONTIER': HERE'S HOW GROWTH MAY PLAY OUT IN PARKER COUNTY

By Spencer Brewer

Parker County anticipates a wave of commercial and residential development, and leadership has intentions to make the area an economic powerhouse as infrastructure rolls out on previously unavailable land.

“When I talk to my site consultant friends and other companies across the country, we talk about the opportunity for land development in this area. It’s the new frontier,” said [Chris Strayer](#).

The Parker County Economic Development Council recently appointed [Strayer as the organization’s new executive director](#). The county, which is located west of Fort Worth, hosts about 11,000 acres of land in its eastern portion that lies within the region’s path of growth.

The [Walsh development](#) has helped drive infrastructure to land that previously wasn’t open for development, such as [contention for a manufacturing plant](#) for Rivian Automotive Inc.

Today, about 60% of Parker County’s workforce heads to Tarrant County to work, many at places like Lockheed Martin’s Fort Worth plant. The Parker County EDC will work to bring in more commercial development and manufacturing to give residents the opportunity to work where they live.

Parker County grew by about 6% last year, among the highest growth rates of any county within the United States.

Several significant parcels that were longtime family holdings have seen activity that may soon create new development. Among these was Dean Ranch, which [sold for a whopping \\$107 million](#).

The entities that acquired Dean Ranch have big plans for the historic property that straddles the border between Fort Worth and Aledo, with visions featuring both residential and commercial development. Dallas developer PMB Capital Investments has [expansive plans for land that lies](#) in both Tarrant and Parker counties, including Veale Ranch.

Swathes of land hold the potential for industrial and manufacturing uses.

Over the past few years, broad trends have impacted the industrial market. Before, many firms wanted leasable space, Strayer said, but since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic companies have begun prioritizing owning their own sites, taking down land and building their own facilities.

“When you look at eastern Parker County, that’s a lot of land that people can acquire and build their own facilities on,” he said.

There’s additional ranches to the west of Weatherford, and Mineral Wells has an airport that represents a hidden opportunity, he said. The Mineral Wells Regional Airport lies a significant distance from the North Texas urban core and could host R&D for the aviation and defense industries.

Going forward, the Parker County EDC will have conversations about how these opportunities and development should play.

Strayer spoke with the *Dallas Business Journal* about growth in Parker County and how development will play out across thousands of acres.

Tell me about the conversations you're having about growth in the county, especially in the eastern sections.

It's 11,000 acres-plus, but if you look at it you're not going to have 11,000 acres of industrial development. You're going to need housing, multifamily, healthcare, retail, office space, education.

As we look at eastern Parker County and Alito and Willow Park and Hudson Oaks and Weatherford, we're working together to figure out where everything is going to go. The growth is going to come, but where is it sustainable? Where do we put things so transportation isn't impacted? So the schools aren't impacted greatly? We need to make sure everybody benefits from the development that's going on.

That's the conversation that we have to have. That's the conversation the community wants to have, and we're going to be working through that.

Are there any specific industry types you hope to attract, or is it too early for those statements?

Right now, it's all of the above, because we haven't had enough time to really think about it. But think about the sort of companies that have looked at Walsh. That mega-site is mostly in Parker County. What's looking there?

Obviously, batteries and EV assembly. We've seen a lot of conversations, not necessarily for that site, but around the country on semiconductors and solar.

I can't say we're selecting one industry to go after because there have been so many industries looking at the area and we don't want to limit ourselves. But we do reserve the right to pick what we want.

Looking at that 11,000-acre swathe of land, it seems infrastructure has been decided on. How long will it take to develop that?

It's a long-term play, because you're looking at 17 square miles. That's a massive swathe of land. However, that's only one piece and there'll be other things happening around it.

You look at Weatherford, we have several 5-acre, 10-acre, 20-acre pieces and 100-acre pieces that will be developed as well. What else do we need to be thinking of to make sure we're getting the right complementary uses to the bigger picture?

Everyone likes the big megasite, the billion dollar deals. But of the projects I was working on in the (Fort Worth Chamber), even projects we're working on here, that's 5% of your pipeline. It might be a larger portion of your investment of that pipeline, but there are a lot of other projects.

I was on the phone yesterday about a project where they needed 20 acres. Perfect, I've got a dozen options for you. We had another project where they needed 200 acres. Ok, I've got some

options for you. We had a project come in last week where they needed 10,000 square feet and then land to build a 50,000-square-foot building. Great, we can do that.

We need to make sure we know where all the options are, number one, and that they're properly promoted. That's going to be everywhere. It could be down in Cresson, it could be in Weatherford, it could be in Brock, it could be in Millsap. The opportunities are abundant.

WHITE ROCK LAKE UPDATES: BARRIER ALONG GARLAND ROAD, MULCH AT DOG PARK

By Renee Umsted

Dallas Park and Recreation staff are expected to meet soon with Texas Department of Transportation representatives to discuss safety measures along Garland Road.

In a statement issued April 14, District 9 Dallas City Council member Paula Blackmon called for bollards to be installed on park property in the southeastern portion of the park. Two vehicle crashes occurred last month in that area, where the pedestrian trail is just feet from Garland Road; one crash [caused the death](#) of a 19-year-old driver, and the other [involved a Dallas Fire-Rescue](#) fire engine.

“Rest assured, I am working through every department I can find at Dallas City Hall along with TxDOT and our state officials to bring safety for motorists, bikers and runners along this dangerous stretch of Garland Road,” Blackmon wrote in the statement. “Until then, please slow down.”

Speeding is only made more dangerous with the traffic congestion generated by TxDOT’s Gaston-Garland-Grand intersection reconfiguration project, which is expected to be [completed this fall](#).

City and park representatives along with community stakeholders have already walked from where East Lawther hits Garland Road to the spillway, District 9 Park Board member Maria Hasbany told the White Rock Lake Task Force.

Now it’s a matter of nailing down the details, which is why a meeting between park staff and TxDOT is needed.

They have to figure out where exactly the barriers can be placed, given TxDOT’s right-of-way along Garland Road, which is a state highway. And the overall look of the barrier has to be determined, though concern about aesthetics is not a top priority, Hasbany said.

On the opposite side of the lake, a pilot program will be implemented soon at the [dog park](#). Bark mulch will be added to an area in the center of the park, where the turf is often deteriorated, Hasbany said. The mulch is expected to reduce the need for maintenance and shorten the duration of park closures after bad weather.

The park will be closed while the mulch is applied; play equipment for the pets will also be installed. A timeline for the project has not yet been set.

Another project getting closer to completion is the installation of [11 directional signs](#) provided by the [White Rock Lake Foundation](#). Board member Ted Ellis said he hopes the signs are in place by the end of the year.

AFTER YEARS OF DEBATE, DALLAS CITY COUNCIL DECISION ON DOWNTOWN I-345 HIGHWAY DRAWS NEAR

Vote set for May 24th on state's preferred option

By Ken Kalthoff

After years of fighting over whether to replace or remove Interstate 345, a Dallas City Council vote on the state's compromise plan is set for this month.

The aging, unmarked elevated highway separates downtown Dallas from Deep Ellum as it links Interstate 45 to the south with U.S. 75 Central Expressway to the north.

Critics who crusaded for years to get rid of I-345 confronted transportation planners this week [at a panel discussion intended to help promote unity](#). City and state officials reviewed the recommended option before the discussion began. The critics did not relax their opposition to maintaining the interstate highway through the city's core.

Built in the 1970s, state engineers say the elevated roadway needs replacement. It carries 180,000 vehicles a day, far more than the average North Texas freeway. The traffic count is expected to increase as millions more people are forecast to move to North Texas in the coming years.

Supporters of removing the hulking structure say the traffic it carries could be diverted to surface streets, creating busy boulevards through the city to support new urban development on freeway area land that would be cleared.

Urban planner Patrick Kennedy first began pushing this idea 15 years ago. He spoke at the panel discussion Monday night at Dallas City Hall.

"This a beachhead for a longer, broader conversation that has to be more comprehensive and has to be more wholistic about building transit, and up-zoning and allowing for more housing," Kennedy said.

He said more data is needed on economic development opportunities from removing the roadway and air quality consequences of continuing with highway development.

"I am actually advocating that we don't move forward, that we don't rush through any of these particular options right now," Kennedy said.

Speakers opposing the freeway replacement spoke at the meeting, including Matt Tranchin with the Coalition for a New Dallas.

"This isn't a transportation challenge. It's how do we redesign the ninth largest city in the country in a way that addresses our greatest needs," Tranchin said. "The reality is our city is struggling. We've got a housing crisis, specifically a workforce housing crisis. We've got a need for jobs, to expand our tax base."

The City of Dallas would have to purchase the entire freeway corridor from the state if the interstate highway was removed, which would drive up the cost. No state or federal money would be available. And transportation planners said the law forbids removing an interstate highway artery that residents count on for access to jobs.

Furthermore, Texas Department of Transportation Dallas District Engineer Ceason Clemens said the boulevard option is insufficient for traffic.

“It’s something that’s a no-go for TxDOT and therefore, it really isn’t an option. I know that more studies are being considered, but we spent the last four years working very closely with the various city departments, really to take that wholistic look. So, we weren’t just looking at the traffic impacts,” Clemens said.

The hybrid compromise recommended by the TxDOT calls for rebuilding the roadway below grade as a trenched highway, similar to the Central Expressway to the north.

Existing ramps and feeder roads would be removed to free adjacent space for new development.

Chief Transportation Planner Michael Morris with the North Central Texas Council of Governments Regional Transportation Council (RTC) sought support for the state plan.

“Let’s rally around the depressed facility, let’s maximize housing and access to parks,” he said.

Morris said Dallas needs to take advantage of federal money available now to help stitch neighborhoods back together and achieve many of the goals the I-345 opponents seek.

Morris said the Interstate 30 Canyon reconstruction with deck park features is also in the works.

“I need more infill development in the center of the region. That’s why the RTC is probably going to spend \$5 billion to rebuilding the inner core of downtown, to create economic development because I can’t let the region develop to the Red River. It’s not sustainable,” Morris said. “So is it a better balance, a better balance to have the through trips on a different plane, and reestablish the human scale elements.”

Well-connected Dallas developer Jack Matthews spoke in favor of the compromise plan.

“I think the hybrid solution at the end of the day is going to give almost everyone a better solution,” Matthews said. “There’s actually going to be a time when fighting more, you’re not going to go as far forward.”

Two Dallas City Council briefings are set this month before the City Council vote on May 24.

Several members have said in the past that they want a new, independent study. The test will be how all 14 members and Dallas Mayor Eric Johnson vote when the time arrives after all these years of talk.

[PDF: IH-345 Public Panel DiscussionProject Considerations and Overview \(City of Dallas\)](#)

[Decision on Downtown Dallas Highway Draws Near – NBC 5 Dallas-Fort Worth \(nbcdfw.com\)](#)

DFW AIRPORT SETS STAGE TO RESTART WORK ON SIXTH TERMINAL WITH NEW AIRLINES LEASE

The new pact with American Airlines and others would replace the 2010 use and lease agreement for 10 years, beginning Oct. 1.

byline

[DFW International Airport](#) has tentatively agreed on a new use and lease agreement with American Airlines and other carriers, [setting the stage for work to restart on a sixth terminal delayed by COVID-19](#).

At this month's board meeting, leaders discussed an authorization to add or remove leased square footage reflected in its carriers' "leased premises" under certain conditions. The agreement would replace the 2010 lease and use agreement for 10 years beginning Oct. 1, [according to internal documents](#).

However, board members went into a closed session for about an hour to discuss the matter, so no substantial information was given aside from documents.

The new agreement signed this month hints at the future of Terminal F stating it would include a "pre-approved capital program" for terminal renovation, more gates and certain infrastructure capital projects.

[American and DFW came to a tentative deal on building a new \\$3 billion Terminal F back in 2019](#), highlighting the partnership that could add up to 24 new gates and give American room to grow for years to come. The new terminal would occupy a spot now filled with a parking lot, the last of six spaces that were part of the original airport design for terminals.

American, and theoretically other carriers, would pay for the new terminal through leases on gates, landing fees and other rents paid to the airport. Fort Worth-based American Airlines is a key player in any deal at DFW because it's the carrier's biggest hub and it had an 86% market share at the airport in March.

But design work was still underway [when the COVID-19 pandemic hit a year later and upended the industry, forcing the airport to put the new terminal on hold indefinitely](#).

After a record 75 million passengers went through DFW in 2019, traffic dropped by nearly 50% in 2020 to levels not seen since the Reagan Administration.

To add to the uncertainty, American Airlines lost \$11.9 billion in 2020 and 2021 and [the industry as a whole is still struggling to return to 2019 levels of traffic because of a shortage of pilots and aircraft](#), further setting back the need for expansion at DFW.

But DFW has been one of the fastest recovering airports on the strength of American Airlines and its dependence on its central hub airport.

After an up-and-down 2022 where the airport brought in 73.36 million passengers, traffic at DFW is up 6.9% for the first three months of 2023 compared to the same period in 2019. American also pulled in a \$10 million profit in the first quarter.

In the meantime, DFW has [built extra space with 8 new gates in Terminals C and D](#), and it plans to [add five more gates in Terminal A](#).

Last summer, investors were told that the airport submitted a \$27.8 million capital spending request to carriers to cover the design cost for Terminal F, [according to the Electronic Municipal Market Access website](#).

“The note in our bond documents is to notify investors that we would like to proceed with the long-term planning of Terminal F,” the airport said in a statement in August. “DFW Airport is committed to informing our investors of potential capital projects as it would have a material impact on the Airport’s debt outlook. We have not received airline funding approval for Terminal F. We look forward to continuing discussions with the airlines regarding Terminal F.”

Related: [DFW Airport prepares for record growth as Terminal F decision looms](#)

They moved to rural Tarrant County for space and peace. Then came the trucks and fireworks

By Abby Church

It was around six months ago when all the trees came down and the lot appeared.

Brush and wood piled up in stacks that towered over houses on a piece of land that used to be grass and trees as far as the eye could see off Eden Road South in unincorporated southern Tarrant County. Construction workers burned the piles to the ground, sending the smoke rolling across the rural neighborhood for days.

Then the 18-wheelers rolled in.

What's now Ranch Truck Parking has space for up to 100 trucks. Neighbors hear a cleared plot of land next to it owned by another developer is supposed to make way for 50 more spaces.

It didn't take long for disruption to start.

Kate Zimmerman, a red-haired veterinarian who lives just across from the lot, has to fully stop when trucks emerge and swing their long bodies across the road, nearly clipping the front of her vehicle.

Most people already travel down the road too fast. The trucks added to the trouble.

The truck lot was at one time the only annoyance. But when the lot's owner, Joe Sterling, plopped his yellow shipping container with red trim to erect his fireworks stand, that was the last straw.

The trucks that roll through sometimes contain hazmat materials, Zimmerman says. Not more than 1,000 feet from Sterling's property is a natural gas well.

So Zimmerman started knocking on doors.

And when they opened, she would ask her neighbors:

"Are you OK with this? And if you're not, do you want to join us?"

Thus began the crusade against the new neighbor.

If there's one thing about Tarrant County's unincorporated areas, it's that there are few rules, and the ones that do exist are hard to enforce.

And if you're a homeowner looking to escape to the country as Tarrant County stretches past its limits in terms of growth, you have to be prepared.

You can have your land, views and freedom. So can your neighbor. It is a collision between property rights and a lack of zoning in unincorporated areas.

Everyone has a right to their opinion, Sterling says, and he's tried to be as accommodating and neighborly as possible. At the end of the day, though, he's following through with his plan to make a profit off his property.

"I know that doesn't fit into somebody else's plans, and I could see how they may not think that's neighborly," Sterling said. "But I'm sure if they bought that piece of property for business purposes, they would move forward with those plans whether the neighbors particularly cared for that or not."

THE WILD WEST

Zimmerman calls where she lives the Wild West.

Her neighborhood in unincorporated Tarrant County around Eden Road South and Dr. Garrison Road is just four miles from Interstate 20. Truck drivers exiting the road to park at Ranch Truck Parking have a short drive for a place to rest for the night.

The area could be a rural North Texas postcard. One Monday as day turned to dusk, the sun glowed through trees and shined down on greenery surrounding Neil Foreman's back porch.

Foreman best describes what Sterling has done as something from Joni Mitchell's "Big Yellow Taxi." He has quite literally paved paradise and put up a parking lot.

The blue-eyed Brit (he's originally from London) is proud of his spot on Eden Road South. He practically had to build it back from the ground up to become something habitable.

At Charlie Blauvelt's house, too, it's serenity. His big, white house on Dr. Garrison Road has a pond, lush grass and a garden out front, complete with a chicken run.

Blauvelt used to wake up early to walk the whole block. Neighbors used to all have golf carts and drive to go see each other.

With the 18-wheeler trucks ripping up and down the street, no one walks down the road anymore, Blauvelt says. Light pollution from the truck lot, too, makes it hard to see the stars. The nearest big lights used to be at the Mansfield school district's R.L. Anderson Stadium 10 miles away.

"It just doesn't seem right to me that a company can have that much of an environmental impact," Blauvelt said. "Because all of us are over here beautifying the neighborhood. We're planting trees, we have bees, we have general gardening, we're making everything beautiful and a better place to live and all they're doing is destroying and destroying and destroying and making it a terrible place to live. It's just a clash."

Then comes the effect on property values. Homeowners worry they won't be able to get their investment back.

The parking lot started to go up just as Blauvelt finished construction on his house.

"I thought, what did I just spend all this money on?" Blauvelt said.

Neighbors say it puts them in a trap.

WHAT ARE THE RULES?

It's worth noting that both fireworks and development come with some rules in unincorporated Tarrant County.

Development-wise, Tarrant County does not have the authority to establish or enforce zoning.

You can buy or sell fireworks and shoot them off in unincorporated Tarrant County, as long as it is 5,000 feet from city limits.

Last year, there were 107 fireworks stands in Tarrant County, according to fire marshal Randy Renois.

There are only two times a year you can buy fireworks in the county: The July season, which runs June 24 to midnight July 4, and the December season, which runs Dec. 20 to midnight Jan. 1.

And despite the short selling period, if you're in an unincorporated area, fireworks are allowed to do what fireworks do 24/7, 365 days a year.

Since Sterling's property is in unincorporated Tarrant County, he's within the bounds of what's allowed.

Renois said it is not hard to enforce the rules in the unincorporated areas. Many people don't know about the county's fire code, he said. But once they know it exists, they usually comply. And on the firework-launching holidays like the Fourth of July, the county sends patrols to monitor fireworks stands or answer calls about them.

Usually, it's not the fireworks businesses that bring the issues, Renois says.

It's the people using the fireworks.

SOMETHING THEY CAN'T PREPARE FOR

To some, being a Texan means freedom to do what you want, whenever you want. But what happens when that freedom encroaches on a whole other group's livelihood, like the neighbors and animals surrounding Sterling and his businesses?

Sterling's parking lot isn't the only move toward industrialization in the area. On Eden Road South you'll find a metal mill where shiny scraps climb high over a tall tan fence.

There's already an encampment of people neighbors say stir up trouble. They worry people coming in and out of the trucking lot will bring more.

That isn't the only obtrusion neighbors say Sterling's business has caused.

One Monday afternoon on Foreman's porch, Zimmerman pulled up a picture of her front bedroom window from the middle of the night. If you didn't know any better, you'd think it the sun was beginning to rise.

The lights from the truck parking lot were just *that* bright.

Zimmerman and Foreman have complained to Sterling before. They say he offered them each \$100 to buy themselves blackout curtains. They could either do that, they say Sterling told them, or sue.

Sterling has since started turning on the lights at 2 a.m. Zimmerman says the sudden switch always wakes her up earlier than she has to be up.

The neighbors worry what could happen when the fireworks stand starts running and people begin to shoot them off over their homes.

Every year around New Year's Eve or the Fourth of July, neighbors like Zimmerman and Foreman expect to have to sedate their animals to prevent freakouts.

But unexpected and unanticipated fireworks they can't prepare for could affect Benji, Foreman's chestnut-colored retired racehorse who's never won a single race he's run. Horses often run away when there's a loud noise, and if they break a leg hopping a fence, it often ends in euthanasia.

They could affect Clyde, Zimmerman's retired working border collie who spends his days parading with his companion Bonnie around 12 acres. He climbs on top of Zimmerman's head when the loud noises start.

And they could affect Jack, the Blauvelt family's teddy-bear-soft red kangaroo who eats Triscuits, yogurt and cashews. Last year Jack cost the family \$6,000 in exotic vet bills to repair his broken leg when he hopped a fence after being startled by a mortar blast.

'THE FIRST ONE THERE'

So how does one enter the fireworks business anyway?

Sterling says it was a way to get his sons a head start at making money.

He's lived in the Mansfield area for nearly 30 years. He opened Joe Dirt's Bomb Shack off FM 1187 when his sons were 14 and 16 and laws changed to allow fireworks in extraterritorial jurisdictions.

Lease problems at Sterling's former truck parking site landed him on Eden Road South, and a lease problem at the former fireworks stand site led him place the stand on the property he had already paid for, he said.

Sterling said he hasn't tried to form relationships with the neighbors. But the last thing he wants to do is have people feel like he's doing something against them.

Sterling has gotten complaints about having to take down the trees on his lot.

"I'm a country boy from Missouri, and you know, I love the woods, love the trees," Sterling said. "Last thing I want to do is take down trees, but I also didn't buy a \$900,000 piece of property to sit there and admire the trees."

He's heard complaints about the lights. He says he turned them so they faced more downward and offered to buy neighbors Amazon gift cards to buy blinds, but they weren't interested.

"I really don't know of any house that don't have blinds on the windows, but OK, I guess then I can't help you much," Sterling said.

Sterling has experience with people doing things he doesn't like with neighboring property. Someone bought property near his on FM 1187 and cleared the trees.

"I didn't like that," Sterling said. "But I can't be mad at him. I mean, that was his prerogative. He spent the money, he has a business plan, he decided he wanted to buy that for the purpose of doing what he's doing. I can't be mad at him for that."

Calls started coming in again when Sterling put his fireworks stand on the lot.

"I just feel like I'm being harassed," Sterling said. "And I get they may not like some of the things, but I mean they have options as well. I mean, they can move away and move to the city where there are parameters, what people can and can't do, or they could have bought the property, and they didn't do either one of those."

He disagrees with the notion he isn't being neighborly.

But he pauses when he addresses the topic.

Sterling hopes the neighbors understand he's trying to run a business. More commercialization in the area is coming, and Sterling believes if someone wants to control the land around them, they should buy it themselves. Otherwise, neighbors have to "let progress take its course."

"They're just mad at me because I'm the first one there."

COUNTY EXPLORES OPTIONS

Officials say they're helping the families.

County Judge Tim O'Hare suggested the band of neighbors file a public nuisance lawsuit when they showed up to a Commissioners Court meeting May 2 to air their grievances.

Zimmerman says they're working on it.

Representatives for O'Hare's office say the judge has asked county administration to do everything in its power to help them out. His staff also plans to ask administrators for updates.

The community's representative on the Commissioners Court, Alisa Simmons, said in text that she's digging for solutions.

Simmons wrote in another text Wednesday afternoon that she planned to schedule a meeting with the property owners in the next week or two.

Blauvelt is a third-generation photographer whose family built a two-story studio in the 1980s, and neighbors behind the site protested it because they didn't want to look at a two-story building.

So the Blauvelts promised they wouldn't cut down trees. They promised to be as aesthetically pleasing as possible. Blauvelt said his parents promised to limit the businesses that would go in the building, and put up lights in the back.

They attended the neighborhood meetings to ask how they could make the situation better.

They had to be good neighbors, he said.

TRINITY METRO 'LEADS' IN COVID-19 RECOVERY OF RIDERSHIP, SAYS CEO AND PRESIDENT RICHARD ANDRESKI

By Hannah Johnson

Trinity Metro is leading in Texas in regards to recovered ridership levels since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, according to the transportation authority's President and CEO [Richard Andreski](#). He provided an update on Trinity Metro to Grapevine City Council on May 2.

Background: Trinity Metro is a transportation authority that provides service to the city of Fort Worth and surrounding suburbs of the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area. Its services include bus; TRE, or Trinity Railway Express; TEXRail; ACCESS, which provides service to those with disabilities; and the rideshare service Zipzone.

Highlights: Andreski cited TEXRail's ridership levels, upcoming rail extensions and new programs as successes for the transit agency.

- Ridership is 89% recovered compared to February 2020.
- TEXRail sees 74% in annual growth. In four years and a few months, Andreski said TEXRail has carried nearly 2 million people.
- Grapevine's train station is the second busiest station in Trinity Metro's system. DFW's station at Terminal D is No. 1.
- On TEXRail, 23% of riders begin and end their ride in Grapevine.
- 72,000 bikes were rented as part of Fort Worth's bike share program.
- 98.1% of TEXRail trains were on time in March.

Quote of note: "Ridership declined significantly during COVID[-19], and I'm pleased to say we're almost back to 100%, and we expect to be back to 100% of our ridership by the end of this year," Andreski said. "That's a great and heartening trend."

Innovations: Trinity Metro's rail extension and electric bike share program are two new and upcoming services Andreski highlighted in his presentation.

- A program is coming to reinvest and upgrade Trinity Railway Express.
- Zipzone, a rideshare service that operates like Uber or Lyft, is one way Trinity Metro is innovating to address ridership levels.
- [A 2-mile extension](#) will be added to the TEXRail Route near the Baylor Scott & White All Saints Medical Center. Service is expected to begin in late 2026.

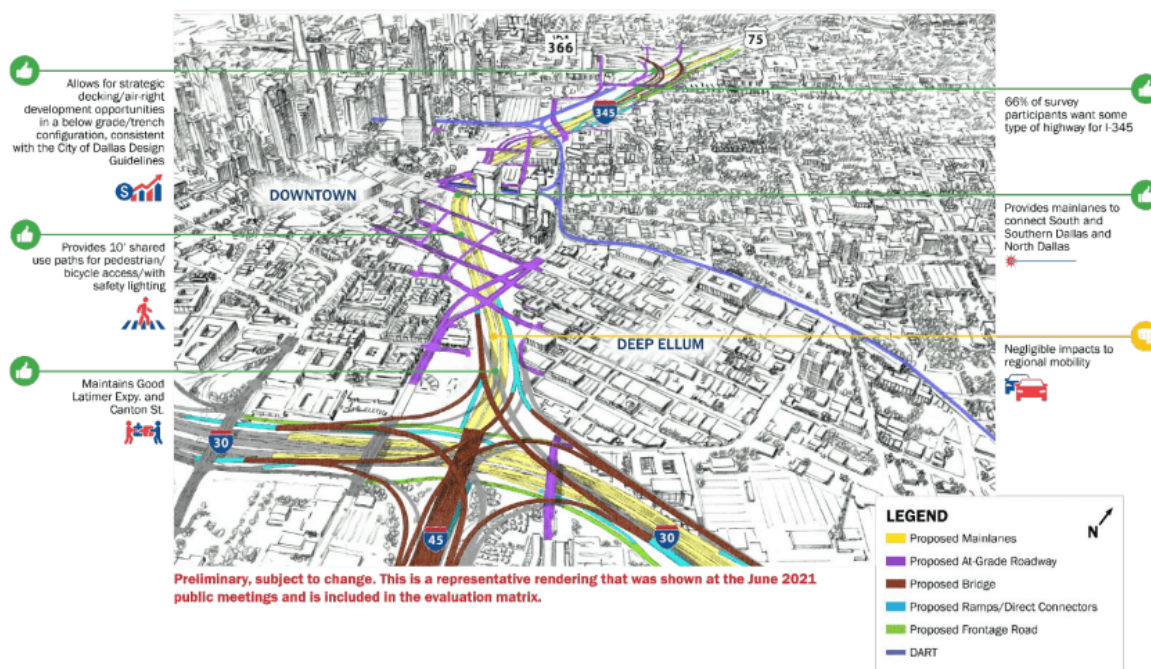
Future of DFW rail: Andreski said changes are coming to further the advantage of rail for residents:

- [Silver Line](#) project that will connect DART rail service between DFW Airport and Plano

- Future expansion to the southwest on the TEXRail line
- Relaunch of Trinity Railway Express with new vehicles, improved schedules and upgraded speeds
- Additional TEXRail vehicles purchased to address increased routes

DALLAS CITY COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE BACKS TXDOT'S INTERSTATE 345 'HYBRID OPTION' IN 5-2 VOTE

By April Towery



Preliminary rendering of Texas Department of Transportation's 'hybrid option' for Interstate 345

City leaders, Texas Department of Transportation officials, and Dallas residents continued talks this week on the future of Interstate 345. What to do with the elevated freeway that cuts through Deep Ellum and downtown Dallas has been hailed as one of the [most important transportation decisions](#) in Dallas' recent history. However, some Dallas City Council members have been hesitant to move forward with TxDOT's "[hybrid trench](#)" recommendation absent a third-party independent study.

That changed Monday, as the council's transportation committee voted 5-2 to support TxDOT's plan to trench the highway 65 feet below ground, on the east side of downtown, making way for traffic to flow on decks over the roadway. About 5.4 acres of surplus right-of-way would be available for housing and economic development under this option.

The vote wasn't necessary because committees aren't required to give recommendations on briefing items. It does put a recommendation on the table for Wednesday's City Council [briefing](#), and an independent study can be commissioned later, committee members said.

Council members Chad West and Jesse Moreno, who represents Deep Ellum within the I-345 study area, balked at the rubber stamp. Following Wednesday's briefing, the Dallas City Council is slated to vote on a resolution of support for TxDOT's recommendation at its May 24 meeting.

- TxDOT-led study that looked at 30 miles of urban freeway segments in Dallas.
- Collaborative process to...improve MOBILITY, create a more LIVABLE urban core, increase ECONOMIC opportunity, CONNECT our neighborhoods and cultural resources.
- Evaluated the scenarios using a MULTI-DIMENSIONAL perspective.
- Looked at the “Art of the Possible.” did not make recommendations.
- Looked at mobility on a regional level not individual corridor level.

No Build



Below Grade Freeway



Reconstruct and Elevate with Ramp Modifications



Removal



TxDOT's CityMAP study, 2016

Moreno appeared particularly interested in an alternate boulevard option, which would add about 25 acres of surplus right-of-way to be used for housing and economic development.

“I hear loud and clear that TxDOT will not support any other option but the hybrid option,” Moreno said. “It doesn’t matter what questions we ask and what the outcome is. The direction from TxDOT is that they’re moving forward with the recommendation of a hybrid, regardless.”

I-345 INDEPENDENT ANALYSIS

West said he was disappointed that the committee was supporting TxDOT’s recommendation, undermining a five-signature [memo](#) filed last month asking for an independent analysis. The

transportation panel also voted 5-2 Monday to not recommend the five-signature memo because it conflicts with the panel’s support of the hybrid option.

Get to Know Refined Hybrid Option

This design puts the interstate main lanes on a lower level (similar to US 75) and provides existing and new city street connections above. Also includes:

- Wider city streets above I-345
- Enhanced pedestrian and cycling options
- Opportunities for future capping development above the interstate
- Maintains the same number of highway thru lanes within the same footprint and still provides an important south-north connection for the downtown district and regional commuters
- Modified access to improve weaving, safety and way-finding
- This design could also surplus about seven acres of right of way and create around eight acres above the highway for potential capping.**

**Under Texas Administrative Code, surplus highway property is offered at fair market appraisal value first to local governments, then to adjacent property owners. If no takers, it goes to a sealed bid process to the highest bidder.

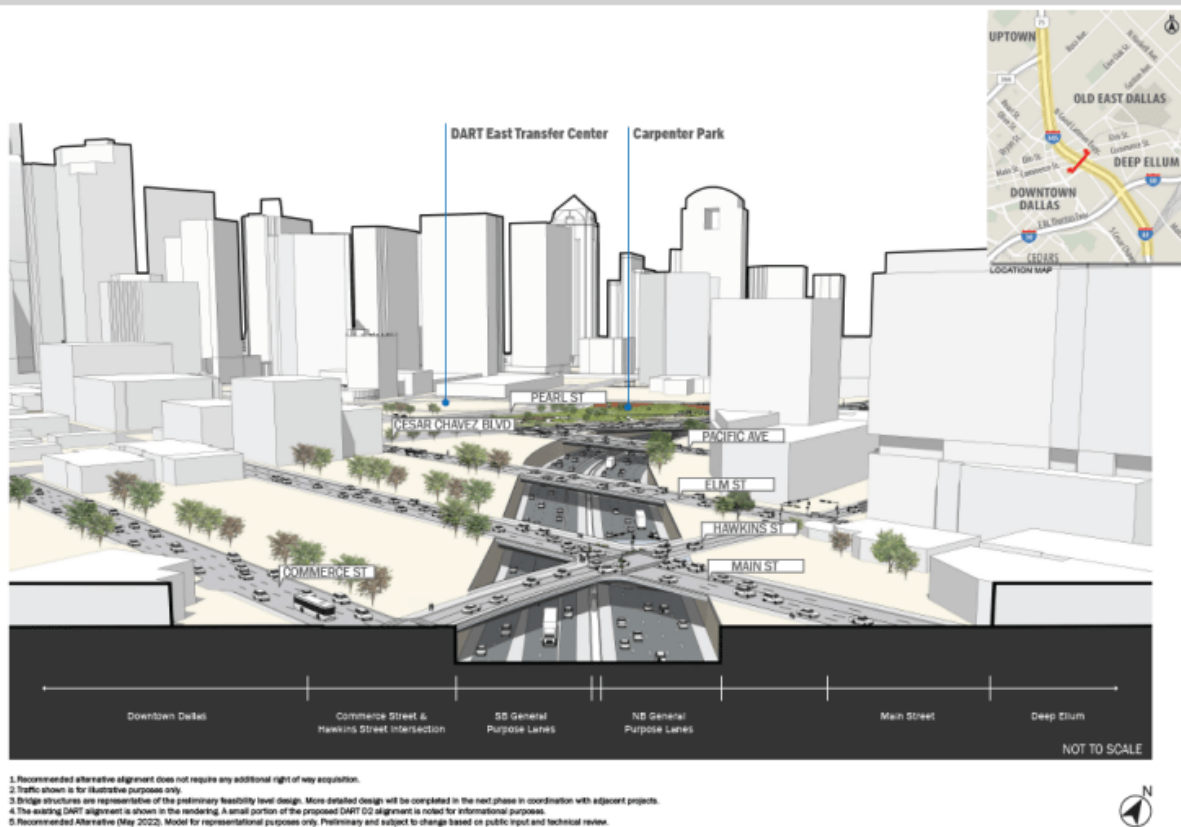
“The ‘hybrid’ terminology is a brilliant marketing term,” West said. “It suggests a compromise. It’s not a compromise; it’s a trench. Let’s just be honest with ourselves. This five-signature memo calls for a study. This committee is recommending that there’s no study done. This generational decision, a decision that will impact our city for the next 70 to 100 years, is being decided to move forward today without a study that is independent of TxDOT.”

When the redeveloped interstate is reviewed again in 2099, the council's successors will see that the transportation committee opted to "jump in the car with TxDOT" and support an option that favors cars over the environment, connecting communities, housing, and economic development, West said.

"I'm disappointed, and staff has said once we do this, there is no turning back," he said.

HOW I-345 HYBRID OPTION WOULD AFFECT HOUSING

North Central Texas Council of Governments Director of Transportation Michael Morris pleaded with community leaders and housing advocates to pull together and support TxDOT's hybrid option during a May 8 [community meeting](#).



Interstate 345 hybrid alternative rendering, Dallas City Council briefing materials

"When we have this amount of money sitting in Washington, you make hay when the sun shines, and this is a great opportunity, in my opinion, to do that," he said.

Dallas Director of Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization David Noguera said freeways have historically disconnected communities in North Texas.

"Here we have an opportunity to reconnect them," he said. "How we do that is up for debate. I believe that the hybrid option does offer a way to integrate that. One of the other things that stands out to me is the importance of leveraging additional funds. When you're developing affordable housing, it's no different than developing market-rate housing, but you typically have a gap that you have to fill with some other sources of funding."

The city wants to use state and federal funding resources whenever possible, Noguera added.

“The question is, how do we put ourselves in the position to do that?” he said. “So when we’re coming before the city manager and the city council looking for funding to carry out our project, we’re not taking a go-it-alone approach. That approach typically doesn’t get us very far, particularly when the needs that we have for housing far exceed the resources. From a housing perspective, I like to take the barnacle approach. I want to latch on to an effort that’s already underway and ride it as far as it’ll take us, particularly when it comes to developing more housing.”

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE BRIEFING ON I-345

Monday’s transportation committee meeting, chaired by Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Omar Narvaez, prompted disagreement among council members who were concerned that an independent study could further delay a project that will already take at least a decade to complete.

“I do not agree with the five-signature memo, and the main reason is it delays the entire process that would cause us to lose funding and ... it wasn’t clear which option we were studying,” Narvaez said. “The biggest [concern] is the funding. Where are we going to get funding to pay for this study?”

West asked whether TxDOT engineers were working to align their transportation plans with recently-approved city policies on housing, economic development, and environmental concerns. While TxDOT has studied the project for 15 years, representatives said they need council support in order to secure funding and proceed with design and detailed planning.

Once they have a recommendation to proceed with, a market study is required to determine the best land use for the surrounding property, said Assistant City Manager Robert Perez.

“Do we know how many more people could live around I-345 with the boulevard option as opposed to the trench option?” West asked.

He was told additional analysis is needed to get that answer.

“That’s the core of my issue with this,” West said.

Electric vehicles in Texas face new tax as Gov. Abbott signs law

Texas owners of electric vehicles will need to pay \$400 to register a new EV, \$200 annually.

By Philip Jankowski

AUSTIN — The whirling whoosh of electric vehicles now comes with a new price in Texas — [\\$200 a year — under a new tax](#) signed into law this weekend.

Gov. Greg Abbott made the tax official Saturday, signing the legislative proposal into law with no fanfare or announcement. The law takes effect Sept. 1.

It will require the owners of electric vehicles to pay \$400 to register a new electric vehicle on top of other fees. Renewing registration would cost \$200.

Owners of hybrids and gas-fueled vehicles do not pay such fees. Those drivers instead pay a 20-cent per gallon gas tax.

The new tax does not apply to electric motorcycles, mopeds and autocycles.

Texas has nearly 200,000 electric vehicles in the state, with more than 30,000 new EVs added to the roads so far this year, according to [data from the Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Coalition](#).

Both the gas tax and electric vehicle tax are dedicated to the state highway fund, though some gas tax revenue is diverted to schools as well. The new tax will funnel at least \$38 million in new money to the state highway fund. Gasoline and diesel taxes will generate an estimated \$3.8 billion in revenue for the state in 2024, according to the comptroller's office.

"This is extremely important to make sure people are paying their fair share and that we have adequate funding for the preservation and maintenance of our highways in the future," said state House Rep. Terry Canales, an Edinburgh Democrat, during debate on the law in April.

The average owner of a gasoline-fueled vehicle pays roughly \$130 in state gas taxes per year, according to average annual mileage and fuel economy data maintained by the [Federal Highway Administration](#) and the [Environmental Protection Agency](#).

During debate over the bill in the House on April 24, legislators floated an idea of creating a lower tier of electric vehicle fees set at \$100 a year for lighter-weight vehicles.

"When we are comparing these fees, we need to be comparing them to like-minded counterparts," Rep. Erin Zweiner, D-Driftwood, said during the debate.

That idea was defeated, and the bill was passed with wide bipartisan support.

Parking, pedestrian improvements installed in Deep Ellum

By Renee Umsted

Valet parking and improvements for walkers and cyclists have recently been added to [Deep Ellum](#).

There's a new valet stand at 2625 Commerce St. between Twisted Root and DOT's Hop House. It's open to visitors 6 p.m.-1 a.m. Thursdays and Fridays, and 1 p.m.-1 a.m. Saturdays and Sundays.

To make it easier to find public parking spaces, wayfinding signs are being installed throughout the neighborhood. Parking is available along I-345 at Elm, Main and Commerce; at Pacific and Good Latimer Expressway; and along Henry between Commerce and Canton.

The [Deep Ellum Foundation](#) and [North Central Texas Council of Governments](#) are asking asking Deep Ellum visitors, residents, businesses and employees to take a [survey](#) and provide feedback on desired parking improvements in the neighborhood.

A new drop-off/pickup rideshare flow zone was added at 2251 Elm St., next to Elm & Good, to help reduce wait times. This joins the existing zones on Good Latimer, Commerce, Malcolm X Boulevard, Floyd and Swiss. Zones will be active and enforced in Uber and Lyft apps 10 p.m.-3 a.m. Fridays and Saturdays.

Improvements focused on pedestrians have also been made. Crosswalks at the intersections of Main and Crowds, Elm and Crowds, and Elm and Good Latimer have recently been painted. Plus, there's a new bike pump at 2626 Main St., in front of Patagonia.

"This comprehensive walkability and traffic mitigation plan aims to provide customers and residents with convenient access to parking and rideshare in less than two blocks of their destination while simultaneously improving public safety and traffic flow by decongesting the core of the neighborhood," Jon Hetzel, president of the Deep Ellum Foundation, said in a statement.

TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS MAKE PUBLIC PLEA TO SUPPORT I-345 TRENCHING PLAN

The City Council is expected to finally weigh in on the future of the elevated highway between downtown and Deep Ellum this month. The body could also stall the project, which has been in planning for more than a decade.

By Matt Goodman

Michael Morris, the most powerful transportation official in North Texas, is ready to be done with I-345.

The Texas Department of Transportation would prefer to trench the highway 65 feet below ground, on the east side of downtown, which would allow traffic to flow and development to come on decks over the roadway and on surplus right of way. But some on the Dallas City Council still have questions about how this would affect the city generations from now.

Morris, the transportation director of the North Central Texas Council of Governments, believes that this is a simple decision. There is money in Washington and in Austin, and that money can be spent tearing the freeway down, digging a 65-foot-deep trench, laying as many as 10 lanes in that depression, and reconnecting existing streets over the below-ground freeway.

Later, Morris says, the city and his organization can figure out all the economic development potential surrounding this project, including how to pay for decks over the freeway that could hold some manner of buildings or parks. The COG, as his organization is known, helps secure state and federal dollars for major infrastructure projects like this one.

And this one is indeed major. TxDOT's trenching plan—the so-called “hybrid” plan—will cost at least \$1 billion and will require years of construction. The state won't pay for decking, and the city will have to purchase surplus right of way freed up when ramps are torn out.

“Make hay while the sun shines,” Morris said last Monday night, May 8, during a specially called panel of top city staffers, prominent developers, and representatives for downtown and Deep Ellum. It was the unofficial kickoff to a month of policy decisions that will end with the City Council either giving its support for the state's trenching plan or continuing to [study other possible plans for I-345](#).

The trench would maintain the highway's present ties to Central Expressway, Woodall Rodgers, and interstates 30 and 45. But it would also create a huge chasm between downtown and Deep Ellum, which makes some on the City Council nervous.

“I absolutely don't want to close the door on a boulevard opportunity,” said Councilman Jesse Moreno after the meeting. His district includes Deep Ellum.

Morris believes that there is presently no money or political appetite at the highest levels of government to remove the highway and replace it with a boulevard. At Monday's meeting, he seemed exhausted by the idea. Monday's panel was, more than anything, a pep rally for the trench boosters. There was no new information provided, outside of an aggressive argument for city officials to rally behind the below-grade freeway.

“I actually deal in reality,” Morris said. “My plea to the group: can we come together today to rally around what is a brilliant, proposed strategy by TxDOT?”

The 50-year-old highway is nearing the end of its lifespan, and the state is looking for direction from the city on how to move forward. It's a tricky arrangement. Texas owns the thoroughfare itself—345 is among the shortest highways on the national system, considered a stub that connects other freeways—but it obviously exists within the city limits.

Dallas doesn't have jurisdiction over the road; the state does. But TxDOT looks for resolutions in support from cities in which its projects are located before it pursues funding. The Dallas City Council is expected to vote on that resolution during its May 24 meeting. If the body does not offer its support, it could effectively stall years of planning. The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will be briefed this afternoon.

Monday's public panel came about because a few council members weren't ready to vote on the resolution when it first landed on a meeting agenda, in February.

Omar Narvaez, the chair of the Council's Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, directed staff to put together a public panel to iron out concerns. He said he wanted a "general public discussion prior to any vote." The panel on Monday was largely composed of those in favor of TxDOT's plan, a time for Morris to ask opponents to join his team.

Many of the assistant city managers over various departments—housing, planning and zoning, economic development, parks, and transportation—spoke broadly about the project. But in some ways, their responses highlighted the concerns of council members who say the city is moving too fast, even after a dozen years of planning from the state.

Julia Ryan, the head of the city's planning and zoning department, acknowledged that the "original construction of this roadway had detrimental effects on the surrounding African American community." The construction of I-345 wiped out [a prominent Black center of commerce](#).

"The city does not have an adopted future land use plan that sets a vision for the development or redevelopment around the structure," Ryan said.

Kevin Spath, the assistant director for economic development, questioned the cost of acquiring land and building on top of decks.

"Are there structural limitations about how to develop on top of a cap and what densities could be developed on top of a cap?" he asked. "These are all the questions that would need to be answered, frankly, before our office could really get in the high gear on implementing a plan and facilitating development on property that the city would become owners of."

David Noguera, the director of housing, said he "was commenting to Michael Morris last week that I've only been exposed to this for the last 15 minutes, while he's been working on this for the last 15 years."

He, too, noted the damage the highway had inflicted on the people who operated businesses in the corner of Deep Ellum where a stretch of the highway now sits. "We have an opportunity to reconnect" these areas, he said, but "how we do that is up for debate, right? I believe that the hybrid [trench] option does offer a way to integrate that" connectivity.

Developer Jack Matthews, of Matthews Southwest, owns land near the convention center and in the Cedars. "From a developer, investment standpoint," he said, "I need to know what the future

is, and I have to have confidence that cities and states are going to work at a certain level. I don't want to be the experiment."

The one voice on the panel that was critical of the hybrid plan was Patrick Kennedy, the urban planner, SMU professor, and DART board member who first presented the idea to remove the highway and replace it with a boulevard.

He called for the City Council to pursue a federal grant through the Biden Administration's [Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program](#) that could pay for another study to explore the impact of removal. TxDOT has said it will not study the boulevard option further because of the congestion its traffic models predict. Too, the governor has ordered TxDOT's bosses not to fund any projects that would lessen vehicle capacity on state-owned roadways. It has already [taken back a project in San Antonio](#) to turn a state highway into a boulevard.

"I'm actually advocating that we don't move forward," Kennedy said, "that we don't rush through any of these particular options right now."

That is what Morris fears, because the City Council can do just that. The body will consider another matter on May 24: stalling the resolution vote until the completion of an independent study into the options around removing the highway. This consideration came at the request of five council members who wanted more information about how the future of I-345 would affect Dallas' land use, including, yes, how traffic would flow, but also the opportunities for adding additional housing, office, retail, and other uses if the highway was not there. Climate concerns also hover over the matter; how would a boulevard affect emissions?

"Just because we have an opportunity for funding does not mean that we should move forward with a project that hasn't been well thought out," said Moreno, the Deep Ellum councilman, in an interview after the meeting. "If we are going to approve any plan moving forward, I want to know what exactly we're getting ourselves into."

Morris spoke of the need for "more infill development in the center of the region."

"I can't let the region develop to the Red River," he said.

But that is what's happening. I-345, he said, "is a key corridor" that "connects the Port of Houston up to Sherman." And despite what Morris says, the COG predicts most of the population growth coming to Dallas' neighbors. The city of Dallas has essentially stopped growing since 2017, [ceding growth](#) to suburban counties like Collin and Denton. Too, the COG's priority transportation projects are, [by and large](#), regional highway expansions that will further sprawl. "We all know what's happening in Sherman, as far as the chips and manufacturing," he said, [referring](#) to T.I.'s \$30 billion semiconductor factory and other production facilities.

Dallas' advantage over the suburbs is in its potential infill development and added density. If the city manages to buck its stagnant population growth over the past half-decade or so to add the 1 million new residents the COG predicts it will, Dallas will need to update what is legal to build to accommodate greater density.

The highways that 345 bridges together fueled the success of the suburbs by way of sprawl. Proponents are so high on removal because of the potential for creating a true urban neighborhood in the heart of the city's core. It would require changes to existing land use

policies to allow for more housing developments beyond single-family. That's part of what supporters of the boulevard option would like to see researched further.

Morris maintains that the highway is necessary for southern Dallas residents who use it for jobs in points north. But, as noted by Councilwoman Gay Donnell Willis earlier this year, what will it mean for 345 if the city is successful in bringing jobs and economic development to southern Dallas? Would it be necessary then?

"What if that changes tremendously," asked Willis, Preston Hollow's representative, "where you have great opportunities for jobs, shopping, et cetera in the southern sector? How do we model that?"

That is one of the reasons Willis joined four of her colleagues in asking for another study, independent of TxDOT, into the road's future.

The table is set. TxDOT first began researching the future of I-345 a dozen years ago, when it produced [a document known as CityMAP](#) (for "Master Assessment Process"). That document explored how best to address the highways that crisscross Dallas' urban core. Removing 345 was one of the possibilities, but navigating the political reality of today is a different game.

Morris was clear on that matter.

"I have to deal with the reality of what our responsibility is," he said. "We have a national government that has a whole bunch of money right now. My board of directors want to get as much of that money in Dallas-Fort Worth as we can. Chairman Narvaez from the city has challenged us to get as much back for the city of Dallas.

"We're the adults in the room here. We're all here on a Monday night. We're the adults. We're the ones that are being asked to give advice to the elected officials. If we could come to grips to argue, let's depress the freeway so we don't have to look at the overhead facility. Let's try to get it fast-tracked Let's get as much of this money as we possibly can. Let's continue to refine the project Let's rally around the depressed facility."

He needs just eight City Council votes to do it.

DFW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT CEO EXPECTS 100 MILLION PASSENGERS PER YEAR BY END OF THIS DECADE

By Holden Wilen

Dallas Fort Worth International Airport has set itself up to grow for years to come now that the airport has finalized a new use and lease agreement with American Airlines Group Inc. and other carriers.

The [10-year agreement](#) inked this week enables the airport to move ahead with plans to [spend almost \\$5 billion on capital projects](#), including the [long-awaited construction of Terminal F](#). The \$1.6 billion project includes a 15-gate concourse.

DFW also plans to move forward with a \$2.7 billion expansion of the central terminal area, including piers extending from Terminal A and Terminal C that will include another nine new gates.

All told, the airport plans to add 24 new gates and with the potential to grow even more.

"We will build a modern and innovative airport that will serve North Texas for decades to come, and we can't wait to get started," DFW Airport CEO [Sean Donohue](#) said.

DFW currently stands as the second-busiest airport in the world. This year, Donohue said he anticipates a record 78 million passengers traveling through the airport. He has his eyes set on a bigger goal though: 100 million passengers a year by the end of the decade.

For Donohue, the signing of a new deal marks the conclusion of a years-long process. DFW and American (Nasdaq: AAL) had been in negotiations before 2020. When the prior agreement expired that year, they extended it due to the pandemic. The airport and carriers operated under month-to-month extensions starting in 2021 as negotiations on a new deal continued.

Donohue offered more insight into the deal, the details of Terminal F and the long-term impact during an interview with the *Dallas Business Journal*:

What did it take to get this deal across the finish line?

We started talking about the future of DFW eight or nine years ago. We had so many different projects and revisions of projects. Then, we started negotiating the lease agreement. When we announced Terminal F, we were pretty close to getting the use and lease agreement then. Obviously the pandemic hit and that slowed everything down by three years.

I'm just I'm delighted about what it means for the future of DFW. American's commitment, you heard loud and clear, is going to remain. The new gates also allow other airlines to grow at DFW, which is a good thing. We have to stay ahead of the growth of the region. The growth of this region is just amazing.

How does what you're planning for Terminal F now look different from when you announced the project initially in 2019?

Interestingly – and I didn't notice this until the other day – when we announced Terminal F in 2019, it was going to be 24 gates. This announcement today is 24 gates. F is 15, and we're adding nine gates with the two piers [from Terminals A and C].

We're adding the same amount of gates as we envisioned back in 2019, which I think is a great signal that we are fully recovered [from the pandemic]. I'm not sure there are many airports in the world that six months after the pandemic ended, or 12 months, are back looking at the future exactly like they looked at it in 2019.

What's the timeline for these projects?

Terminal F should open in 2026. And then Terminal C, because we have to do that in phases, will open in 2028.

When will RFPs start going out to get bids for contracts on these projects?

For the central terminal, many of those contracts have already been approved because we had come to an agreement with American about 18 months ago. But then we've added the piers, and we've updated the design. That was the change today. For Terminal F, hopefully RFPs start going out within the next six to nine months.

You cited a goal of 100 million passengers a year by the end of this decade. How confident are you in being able to achieve that?

If you do the math, to get to 100 million by the end of the decade, it takes a compound annual growth rate of 3% to 4%. The region is probably growing at a higher rate than that, so we think it's a reasonable forecast. The great thing about Terminal F is if the growth continues and airlines want to grow even faster, the site allows for future growth for a second phase at the terminal.

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

FLYING VEHICLES OVER TEXAS? THE STATE IS GETTING READY

Don't give up your minivan just yet, but that day may come

Dallas Morning News Editorial

Join us in dreaming wistfully of hovering in a flying vehicle above Interstate 35 without worries about fender benders and mind-numbing brake lights.

Imagine shorter commutes, easier package deliveries, quicker disaster responses and transportation of medical supplies and injured passengers.

If there is such a thing as a transportation nirvana for the weary, ground-mired commuter, this would come pretty close. Of course, since this is Texas, aerial commuters probably still wouldn't use their blinkers or turn on their lights in a cloud bank.

Flying vehicles aren't ready for prime time quite yet, but [Texas is preparing](#) for the day when they might be. Just days ago, Gov. Greg Abbott [signed a bill into law](#) to ready Texas for flying vehicles. And the idea is not as far-fetched as some might think.

Filed by state Sen. Tan Parker, R-Flower Mound, the new law (Senate Bill 2144) authorizes the Texas Department of Transportation to develop a statewide plan to assess critical infrastructure and provide support for advanced air mobility, a fancy term for automated and electric-powered, short-haul air taxis and vertical takeoff and landing aircraft that fly much like helicopters.

The law also empowers the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to devise strategies to involve school districts and other educational institutions in the initiative. Regional organizations such as the North Central Texas Council of Governments also are exploring ways to integrate drone technology into future transportation plans.

Already a major magnet for aerospace and aviation jobs, Texas is expected to be an early test location and commercial operations/investment hub for a new industry that could generate \$115 billion in annual economic activity and produce 280,000 jobs within two decades.

More bullish estimates are that the industry could grow to between \$1.5 trillion and \$2.9 trillion by roughly 2040. And there is a national security reason for Texas and the United States to be on the cutting edge. More than 70% of the drone market is controlled by non-U.S. companies, and China has made drone and related aviation innovation a top commercial and military priority.

Of course, new technologies create new challenges. In addition to concerns about safety, futurists with a dark view of technology warn that flying cars will create more sprawl, weaken social cohesion and negatively impact the environment. Still, demonstration projects are underway to simulate potential high-demand aerial routes for unmanned, autonomous cargo and passenger vehicles; connect rural and urban communities; help firefighters battle wildfires; and assist railway and oil companies inspect rail lines and pipelines.

This is a new next aviation frontier, and Texas is wisely preparing to be part of it.

‘NEVER BEEN ABOUT US’: RESIDENTS SAY HIGHWAY 5 DECK PARK PLAN PUSHES ASIDE EAST MCKINNEY

Some are concerned the proposed project will cause delays to improvements at other crossings

By Haeven Gibbons

In the past five years, seven pedestrians have been hit by cars while trying to cross State Highway 5 between North Smith Street and Elm Street in McKinney, according to data collected from Texas Peace Officer's Crash Reports processed by the Texas Department of Transportation.

In the past 10 years, there have been two pedestrian fatalities on the stretch of Highway 5 that runs through McKinney, according to McKinney police records.

"I've been concerned for years about the intersection at Smith Street," said Jennifer Hollins, 62, who grew up in East McKinney. "I talked to several people asking them why can't we get a signal light there. It needs to be updated."

As a kid, Hollins, would walk across the then two-lane highway at the intersection of Smith Street to go to school or pick up snacks from the grocery store. Sometimes, she'd grab a snow cone from Ms. Pauline's stand that sat on the edge of the highway.

Now, five lanes of asphalt give way to cars that speed past tire and muffler shops on the road's edge.

Maria McKinzie, 63, also says east side residents, those impacted the most by the danger, have asked for safer crossings along the highway that has long divided the predominantly Black and Hispanic [legacy neighborhoods](#) from the rest of the city.

"I've crossed that road so many times, and we've asked for road improvements, we've asked for curbs," said McKinzie, who has lived in East McKinney all her life.

Now, TxDOT is working to [make improvements](#) along the highway, including the stretch that runs through downtown McKinney. The reconstruction of Highway 5 by TxDOT is about 60% designed and is anticipated to be awarded in late 2025 pending construction funding, according to Madison Schein, spokesperson for TxDOT.

In addition to TxDOT's project, council has [directed city staff](#) to move forward with [plans for an inverted deck park](#) that would [create a pedestrian connection](#) across the highway at [Louisiana and Virginia streets](#) to facilitate a safe crossing, connect communities east and west of the highway and enhance the downtown McKinney cultural district, said assistant city manager Kim Flom.

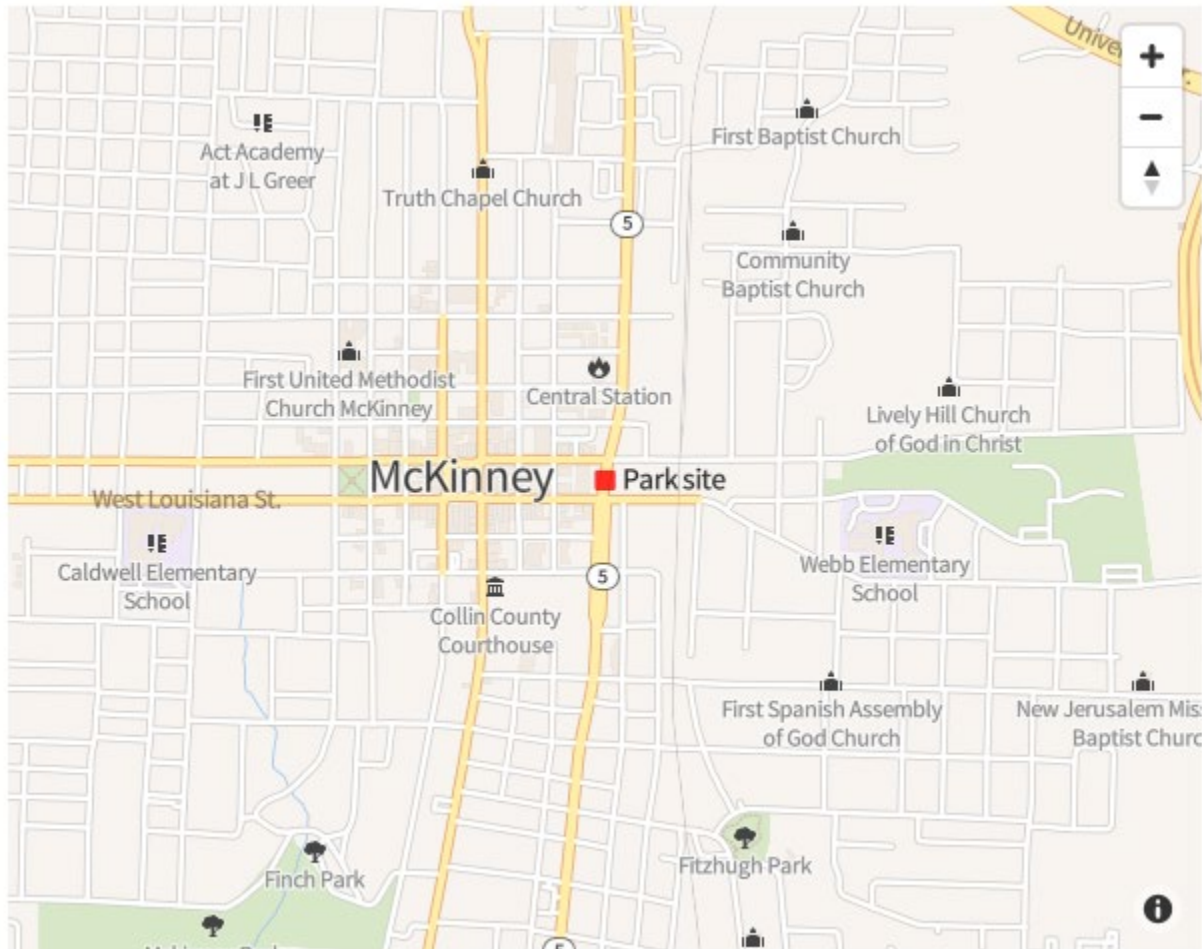
However, east side residents worry the ambitious project will slow TxDOT's plans for the much needed improvements at other intersections, and while city staff has coined the park as a "bridge" that will "stitch" together East and West McKinney, many east side residents see it as downtown encroaching on their community and seeping into their neighborhoods to eventually replace them.

"It's never been about us," said Maegan Escamilla who grew up and still lives in East McKinney. "It's never been about making it a safe, comfortable place for East McKinney residents to visit

and enjoy and be safe. It's always about bringing tourists, bringing the west side over the highway to take over our space."

PROPOSED MCKINNEY PARK

A deck park would cover Highway 5 between Virginia and Louisiana streets.



Shannon Van Zandt, a professor of urban planning at Texas A&M University said the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 created the nation's interstate system, and in many cases those interstates were purposefully put through cities to reinforce segregation that was already happening because of redlining — a discriminatory practice in which financial services like mortgages and insurance loans were withheld from potential customers who resided in neighborhoods with a significant number of racial and ethnic minorities and low-income residents.

"A physical barrier," Van Zandt said. "Yes, you can walk across it, but not safely or easily."

Van Zandt added that while projects like this can be attractive for the city as a whole, mirroring nationwide efforts to increase investment in connectivity and other ways to reunify communities that may have been historically separated intentionally or otherwise, she worries about the potential for gentrification around the area as East and West McKinney are reconnected.

"On one hand, I can see how the city might feel that they're bringing new businesses to East McKinney in an area that might otherwise be depressed, but if those businesses aren't geared

towards the community that's already there, then they're going to have the impact of attracting people from West McKinney, not to live in East McKinney but to come to East McKinney to enjoy those amenities that are for them and not necessarily for the community that is there already," Van Zandt said.

Expanding downtown

Many longtime east side residents do not use the crossing at Louisiana and Virginia streets because it leads into downtown where shops and restaurants are mostly unaffordable. The median household income in East McKinney in 2021 [was \\$66,086](#) with a poverty rate of 12.3%, compared to the city's overall median household income of \$106,437 and poverty rate of 6.6%, according to [census data](#).

Instead, residents often cross farther down the corridor at Elm Street to the south or Smith Street to the north to access things like gas stations, dollar stores and El Rancho Supermercado. District 1 City Council member Justin Beller said there are about six intersections along the corridor that need pedestrian protection. Elm Street is the only crossing with a stoplight outside of downtown between Industrial Boulevard and U.S. 380, but sidewalks to access it are crumbling.

"Priorities are elsewhere," Escamilla said.

Conversations about the deck park come at a time when growth and development is coming to East McKinney.

The [inverted deck park](#) would go underneath the highway and cover about 2 acres, seamlessly connecting the historic downtown with [development projects](#) that are underway on the east side, including TUPPS Brewery and the new City Hall plaza. People could walk from downtown to these facilities without getting in a car and without crossing the highway.



Highway 5 downtown pedestrian Connection Deck Park inverted deck park design.(City of McKinney)

“They never were interested in anything on the east side until City Hall started being built,” McKinzie said of city officials.

The project — expanding the footprint of downtown in a pedestrian friendly way — would cost \$40 million to \$45 million with annual operations and maintenance costing up to \$2.5 million. The North Central Texas Council of Governments has committed up to \$30 million for the inverted park option.

“We have more than just a square. We have the flour mill, cotton mill, the old mill district, there’s a lot of legacy, a lot of history in our city that’s on the east side of Highway 5,” said Mayor George Fuller. “My pushing for this project for the last five years has been that we have an opportunity to expand what people perceive right now as our downtown.”

Pushed aside

Some east side residents who have moved to the area more recently see the development and the deck park as a way to help the value of the neighborhood grow and hope development will bring grocery stores, banks, pharmacies and movie theaters to the mostly industrial area.

“If a new movie theater or grocery store gets built, it’s always like closer to the 75, and then what gets built over here is like a storage facility,” said Mark Thibodeaux, who moved to East McKinney with his wife, Jessica, from California five years ago. “I really hope [the deck park] becomes a bridge and gets rid of the wall stigma of the 5.”

But during a [City Council work session](#) on April 18, Beller voiced his concern about the park project slowing TxDOT’s planned improvements for intersections along the entire corridor.

“We’re not fulfilling this basic service need that exists out there,” Beller said. “We have bigger problems along this entire corridor that need solutions, and I don’t see this as a solution to any of those problems that we have. I see it as a good development, as it helps downtown and helps the east side, but it’s not environmental justice, it’s not restitching a community.”

Flom said the deck park project does not diminish or change the city’s efforts in working with TxDOT to improve pedestrian connectivity along the corridor.

“We fully anticipate that pedestrian connectivity will be improved up and down the corridor. That was always the plan,” Flom said. “The deck park was an add on and a way to increase public open space in the downtown portion of the corridor.”

Even though city staff do not anticipate the park project will slow TxDOT’s projects for safer crossings along the entire corridor, longtime east side residents say they feel forgotten, that their needs have been pushed aside and that the park does not break down a barrier as much as it extends it, especially as the developments coming across the highway don’t cater to the community.

“It is the council’s mission to get this done so that at the end of their terms, they can say this is what we did to contribute to the city of McKinney, and look at how it’s bringing both sides of the highway together,” Escamilla said.

“I don’t see that happening with this project.”

IS TWITTER STILL AN EFFECTIVE PLANNING TOOL?

Twitter has been a daily dose of drama and upheaval ever since Elon Musk offered to pay over \$40 billion to buy the social media platform. Media outlets and public transit agencies had been abandoning the social media platform—should planners?

By James Brasuell

The social media universe has been in turmoil ever since Elon Musk bought Twitter for the cost of a mere \$43 billion. Journalists have been quick to [lament the state of the social media platform](#)—a long-time favorite among the profession for providing access to a universe of information and sources at the touch of a mobile phone screen. Think pieces [speculating about the date and time](#) of the platform's final demise [are common](#). Public transit agencies and major daily newspapers have come to the conclusion that the platform no longer works for them.

Less ink has been spilled over the question of whether Twitter is still an effective tool for planners, though [Planetizen mentioned the risk](#) of Elon Musk's acquisition of the site in the 2022 edition of the "Top Twitter for Planners" list. Suffice to say that many of the same factors that have confused and frustrated media outlets and public transit agencies are also applicable to the experience of planners.

Other changes, namely the introduction of the Blue subscription service and the unblocking of accounts dedicated to the promulgation of hateful messages, have precipitated a perceptible vibe shift on Twitter. In my opinion, and the opinion of many other one-regular Twitter users, it is harder to identify authorities on any given subject, including the numerous geographies and concepts of planning. Rather than the verified authorities of the past, the Blue subscription service prioritizes a sycophantic variety of post-Elon Twitter user. Favorite sources and community organizations have left the platform or reduced the number of communications posted on the site. Twitter just isn't the same.

Twitter once was once the social media platform of choice for planners. [Year after year](#), Planetizen collected and shared [the best of planning Twitter](#). In 2023, we find ourselves questioning whether Twitter is still an acceptable platform for professional purposes. Like in so many other forums in public life, it's become harder and harder to separate fact from fiction on Twitter—a problem for which Twitter largely has itself to blame. Verifiable facts and human opinions are the lifeblood of planning practice, so what is a planner to do with Twitter in 2023?

A Chronology of Auspicious Events

In case you missed it, or in case you have been overwhelmed by the steady stream of alarms and pearl clutching over the developments at Twitter, the website TechCrunch has a page that presents a [chronology of events](#) in the recent history of the platform. The summary below is an attempt to focus especially on the developments most pertinent to the question of whether Twitter is still a benefit to the practices of planning.

Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk, who was already [problematic figure in the world of planning](#), announced a bid to buy Twitter in April 2022. The purchase finally went through in October 2022. Almost immediately, Musk relaxed content policies on the platform in the name of free speech, and [researchers noticed an unprecedented increase in hate speech](#). To date, Musk's [professed free speech absolutism](#) has been mostly selective in application—

he's [censored accounts that criticized him directly](#) and also enacted content policies that allowed [state suppression of speech](#).

Two of the biggest changes for the experience of Twitter dropped in January. Twitter launched a [new default algorithmic timeline](#) "For You" on January 11, forcing users to confront the algorithms idea of relevant content, rather than the curated list that users signed up for. The move was reminiscent of the band U2 automatically loading their album, the laughably titled *Songs of Innocence*, to iTunes without user consent. (Elon Musk is a lot [less likely to apologize than Bono](#), however.)

On January 18, Twitter began offering a new subscription service called Twitter Blue that reserves the former symbol of verified users, a blue check, for those willing to pay for the vestige of prestige. Toward the end of march, Musk announced that beginning on April 15, [only Blue subscribers would be published](#) on the For You timeline (though as of this writing, in Mid-May, that seems not to be the case, yet, in this user's assessment). Reply Tweets, always imperfect (trolls) but still somehow fertile ground of productive discussion and debate, now actively promote subscribers who have paid for a cheap facsimile of authority. A few weeks later, Blue subscribers were allowed to post 10,000-character-long posts, a move some believe was meant to respond to competitor Substack. (Twitter is also [censoring Substack links](#), by the way.)

After the [chaotic rollout of the Blue subscription service](#), a host of mainstream daily news sites—the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, BuzzFeed, CNN, and Politico—in March publicly rebuked Musk by refusing to pay for Twitter Blue subscriptions, releasing statements criticizing the program as destructive to the field of journalism. Other media outlets also went silent on Twitter, including Boston NPR affiliate WBUR, Hawaii Public Radio and LA-based local news source LAist. NPR announced that it would cease all communications on Twitter, after being [labeled by the app as "state-funded media"](#), in April. During the same month, Musk [dropped the blue check marks](#) for legacy verified accounts, even [including the New York Times](#).

Also in April, Twitter updated its content moderation guidelines regarding hateful content, [removing a policy that prohibited the targeted deadnaming](#) or misgendering of transgender people. Progressives will also find fault with the app's accessibility practices since the ownership change. As reported by TechCrunch, "One of the numerous rounds of [job] cuts eliminated the platform's entire accessibility team. Senator Ed Markey (D-MA) called on Elon Musk to bring the accessibility team back in an [open letter](#)."

Site failure had been mostly nonexistent since the app's halcyon days, but it has become a recurring theme with Musks's Twitter. There was an episode in February, for example, [when the app broke down entirely](#), leaving users without the ability to Tweet. The February breakdown was [followed by a March breakdown](#). All in all, Twitter has not been as stalwart or as accessible for a professional field, planning, constantly striving for certainty and access.

Public Transit and the Twitter API

Perhaps the most direct connection between the new Twitter and the world of planning was a decision that rendered public transit agencies unable to automate service and system updates. Twitter is central to public transit, not just for advocates to debate plans, discuss service levels, or explain for the umpteenth time what the term headway means, but also by riders trying to stay

up to date with service changes and disruptions on a day-to-day basis as well as for agencies to gather feedback and gauge the rider sentiment. Recent research shows just how much riders and agencies leveraged Twitter for information [during the Covid-19 pandemic](#), for example.

Despite all that social benefit, in April, [Musk announced changes](#) that would require payment of \$50,000 a month for access to Twitter's API to automate Tweets. Automated systems are used by transit agencies, as well as other [public safety organizations](#) such as the National Weather Service, and media organizations, such as Planetizen. For Twitter to rescind automation from long-time users to help fill a gap in revenue created by sending advertisers fleeing from a wave of racist rhetoric, read to some observers like extortion. In April, the [New York Post](#) and [Curbed](#) picked up news of the emerging threat to public transit Twitter operations. The [New York Times](#), [AMNY](#), [Bloomberg](#), and the [Associated Press](#) reported at the end of April that the New York MTA had gone dark on Twitter.

A few days later, Twitter reversed the policy, as reported by the [Washington Post](#) and [AMNY](#), but the damage was done. Elon Musk has a track record of forcing the public to choose allegiance between his fanciful ideas and the tried and true practices of a public transit, [just like he did in 2018](#) when Musk's enthusiasm for tunnel projects triggered a shouting match with Human Transit author and transit planning consultant Jarrett Walker.

Vibe Shift

It's possible to mostly avoid confrontation with what Twitter has become, by curating your own lists and not venturing into the reply section on any given tweet, though avoiding the replies is proof of some of what has been lost. Gone are reasoned debates between experts. Intellectual pursuits have dissolved into a steady stream of blue check-bearing sycophants, dog whistles, ad hominem attacks, and the Dunning-Kruger effect. The "vibe shift" achieved by the Blue subscription program might not be noticeable enough to take down Twitter entirely (the blue checks are clearly relishing in their newfound prominence, for example), but it's enough to make many people think twice about opening the app in pursuit of useful information.

The graveyard of defunct social media apps is long and distinguished, including once-household names such as Friendster, MySpace, and Vine to name a few. Others, still hanging on, no longer hold the cultural cache they once did in key demographics (Instagram and Facebook, for example). Most of those apps were replaced by new and improved competitors—and each offers cautionary tales for Twitter. Friendster constantly crashed. MySpace required too much HTML wrangling and lacked a customizable timeline. Vine didn't recognize what it had going for it. Facebook was overrun by less fun voices (aka, grandparents and Boomers). Twitter seems to be risking all of these mistakes simultaneously.

The cultural and economic footprint of Twitter is already greatly reduced. Musk's reputation, [already suffering](#) in the court of public opinion, [appears greatly damaged](#). Twitter's brand is [irrevocably altered](#)—damaged might be a better word. Twitter, the company, isn't even called Twitter anymore. According to court documents [filed on April 6](#), Twitter, Inc is now known as X Corp. Moreover, thousands of workers no longer call themselves Twitter employees. Twitter's workforce is down from about 7,500 employees to less than 2,000 since Musk.

In December, Musk posted a [Twitter poll](#) asking if he should step down as CEO of Twitter, promising to follow the command of the crowd, no matter the result. The crowd voted for him to leave. In May, just last week, Musk [finally announced a successor](#): Linda Yaccarino, previously

an advertising executive at NBC Universal (cue *30 Rock* jokes). Time will tell if Yaccarino is a more stable force for Twitter.

As for what we can do to replace, supplement, or adjust Twitter's use in light of all this turmoil, following Planetizen's Top Twitter lists from [2020](#) and [2022](#), or my own [News](#) list, will help cut down the noise from a platform...and will deny Elon Musk the satisfaction of deciding which Twitter users are "For You." In the meantime, I'd also recommend requesting access to BlueSky, Post.News, and Mastodon and seeing which one sticks. BlueSky has been attracting the most [positive media coverage](#) in recent weeks, but it's [hard to get an invite](#) to join that platform, and the window of opportunity for the app could be closing with every passing day. I'd like to recommend an obvious substitute, but the barriers of entry have been challenging enough that I haven't been able to devote the necessary time and attention to any of these options. Twitter is still delivering news and insight in real time at a scale and volume that the emerging competitors just aren't capable of producing. Until that day comes, many of us will be stuck with Twitter, I am afraid.

The fact is that Twitter always had limitations and weaknesses—well documented [overrepresentation based on race and income](#), the [use of the tool for misinformation](#), and [Donald Trump's presidency](#) are a few examples. The problem hasn't always come from the app either. For years, transit-interested Twitter users have relied on the platform solely for [venting their frustration with public transit agencies](#), rather than participating in the processes, voting, and riding to actually plan, fund, and improve transit systems.

The use of Twitter by planners should have always come with serious caveats about the need for critical thinking and more representative public engagement. The trends on the platform have exacerbated those weaknesses and risked even more very bad outcomes. But instead of waiting for some new app and some new tech billionaire to deliver us from Twitter, I'll be actively looking for more permanent solutions to the Twitter problem. Google alerts have already provided a good substitute, providing a steady stream of info to my emails (too many emails) without the drama of social media.

We at Planetizen used to recommend the [Top Twitter feeds for planners](#) with a big reveal every year. This year we are recommending alternatives to Twitter. Although no clear alternatives are yet available, we at Planetizen will also be sure to keep readers apprised of new developments. If and when a post-Twitter victor emerges, you can read about it [here](#).

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL IMPLEMENTS CERTIFICATION OF EMERGING AND RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM IN TEXAS

The program allows for transportation technology providers to implement innovative solutions to transportation issues while obtaining required safety and operations certifications to serve the public.

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) has implemented a Certification of Emerging and Reliable Transportation Technology (CERTT) program in the Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, area. The program allows for transportation technology providers to implement innovative solutions to transportation issues while obtaining required safety and operations certifications to serve the public. CERTT seeks to connect area governments with transportation technology innovators and provide a level playing field for evaluating new technologies.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) has connected local governments with transportation technologies in two rounds since the RTC's policy was established. The first round involved Transpod, a hyperloop company, and JPods, which envisions a network of self-driving pods transporting people along a fixed track above traffic. In the latest round, NCTCOG has connected Swyft Cities with area cities interested in implementing its technology to improve transportation efficiency.

Swyft Cities is designing and testing a gondola-style system that offers a potential solution to first- and last-mile connectivity challenges, as well as circulation of travelers in a dense urban district or campus setting. These gondola networks can provide an alternative to walking, cycling, or driving, particularly in areas with major highways or heavy traffic congestion. NCTCOG received 10 submissions from the cities of Arlington, Dallas, DeSoto and Plano.

Each city documented the specific transportation challenges and locations that could be served by this innovative technology, and Swyft Cities will determine which opportunities it wishes to pursue in the coming weeks.

While the submitted projects are not yet funded, they are the first step in an ongoing conversation between Swyft Cities and interested municipalities. NCTCOG will continue to provide support as needed for future project planning.

How the process works

When a company decides to propose a transportation technology solution, the RTC's CERTT policy triggers a process aimed at ensuring a level playing field. The following steps are taken:

1. NCTCOG staff ensures the technology solution conforms to policy guidance and the long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).
2. NCTCOG staff briefs the RTC, which initiates the process.
3. Local governments may then submit potential locations for the technology.
4. The technology provider determines which location to pursue.
5. The RTC initiates development activities, with NCTCOG staff providing support.

Even with nearly \$150 billion to be spent through 2045 on the region's multimodal transportation system, NCTCOG forecasts more corridors will become significantly congested over the next two decades. The region needs new, innovative ways of addressing transportation limitations to provide safe, reliable alternatives to travelers and preserve quality of life.

How NCTCOG is helping

NCTCOG staff will be available to support coordination for proposals that cross multiple jurisdictions, as some technologies may require longer corridors for their certification. Once a technology provider has selected a potential corridor and local partner to move forward with, detailed negotiations regarding contingencies, project timelines and funding considerations will occur between the provider and the local government.

SEVERAL DALLAS-FORT WORTH CITIES ARE AMONG THE FASTEST-GROWING IN THE COUNTRY

Staff

DALLAS - The growing Texas economy led the state to once again dominate the list of fastest-growing areas in the country.

The census bureau estimates as of July 1, 2022 show Fort Worth had the largest increase over the year with more than 19,000 people added. The city is now the 13th largest in the country with about 956,000 people.

Dallas and Frisco had the 13th and 15th largest increases. Dallas added 8,833 people for a total population near 1.3 million people and Frisco added 8,506 for a population of 220,000.

The Denton County city of Little Elm was the 5th fastest growing in the country with an increase of 8% in one year. The population there is now just over 55,000.

The Dallas-Fort Worth metro area had the most significant increase in metro area populations across the country with 170,000 people added.

The DFW metroplex now has about 7.9 million residents and is the 4th largest metro area in the country behind only New York, Los Angeles and Chicago.

US metros are growing, many reversing 2021 drops, census data shows

Many metro areas that lost population during the pandemic are growing again or saw smaller losses than the year before.

According to the Associated Press, during the first full year of the pandemic in 2021, more than half of the 20 largest U.S. metro areas lost residents, and all U.S. metro areas grew by just 0.1%, as fear of the virus sent residents fleeing the most densely-populated urban areas and the popularity of remote work allowed people to live far from their workplaces.

By comparison, only eight of the 20 largest metro areas decreased in 2022, and the growth rate for all U.S. metros was 0.4%.

Among the largest U.S. metros that had gains in 2022 after experiencing losses in 2021 were Washington, Miami-Fort Lauderdale, Seattle, Minneapolis and San Diego, according to 2022 population estimates released Thursday by the Census Bureau.

The Dallas-Fort Worth area grew the most among U.S. metros, jumping by six-digit figures for a second consecutive year.

Other metropolitan areas which saw the largest growth in number were Houston, adding more than 124,000 residents; Atlanta, with almost 79,000 new residents; Phoenix, with an additional nearly 73,000 people; and Orlando, Florida, adding almost 65,000 new residents.

There were other signs that 2021's pandemic-related migration changed a year later. Boise, Idaho and Provo, Utah — two metros that were popular destinations in 2021 for residents

fleeing the West Coast's most populous cities — dropped out of the top 20 in population growth in 2022.

By that same token, smaller communities known as micropolitan statistical areas grew by 0.1% last year compared to 0.2% in 2021.

Metropolitan statistical areas consist of one or more counties containing a central city with a population of at least 50,000 residents that together have a high degree of economic and social connections. The central city in a micropolitan statistical area must have at least 10,000 residents but no more than 50,000 residents.

Population change is driven by migration, including within U.S. borders as people move around and internationally as people arrive from abroad. It is also dependent on a community's number of births and deaths.

Thursday's data release doesn't show the reasons behind population changes, but similar data at the county level released in March showed it was mostly driven by international migration.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

[Several Dallas-Fort Worth cities are among the fastest-growing in the country \(fox4news.com\)](https://www.fox4news.com/story/news/nation/2023/04/20/several-dallas-fort-worth-cities-are-among-the-fastest-growing-in-the-country/7048147002/)

TXDOT ENGINEER DOUBLES DOWN ON INTERSTATE 345 HYBRID OPTION, COUNCIL TO VOTE NEXT WEEK

By April Towery

Dallas City Council members resumed a debate Wednesday over whether to support Texas Department of Transportation's "hybrid trench" recommendation for Interstate 345.

TxDOT engineer Ceason Clemens tried to make it easy for them. Clemens reiterated throughout the two-plus-hour briefing that the highway department is committed to the hybrid option, won't fund an alternative, and delays caused by further study could be detrimental to securing funding.

"I would never recommend a boulevard to our commission," Clemens said. "We looked at the traffic impacts. It just doesn't make sense. We really think we can provide a benefit to the users of the facility as well as the adjacent communities with our hybrid alternative. In my opinion, it would never get to the commission because my responsibility is to recommend projects and I would not recommend anything other than the hybrid."

A [council vote is expected March 24](#) on a resolution of support for TxDOT's plan to trench the highway 65 feet below ground on the east side of downtown, making way for traffic to flow on decks over the roadway. About 5.4 acres of surplus right-of-way would be available to the city to purchase for housing and economic development.

Finding Alternative Funding Sources

The council's Transportation and Infrastructure Committee [voted](#) 5-2 Monday to support the hybrid trench option, effectively dismissing a five-signature [memo](#) filed last month calling for an independent study of the project.

Following Wednesday's council [briefing](#), District 1 Councilman Chad West acknowledged that exploring other options rather than supporting TxDOT's solution could be more costly to the city, but the city hasn't looked into any additional funding sources.

"TxDOT reminded us that they have funding available to support the trench but would not pay at this time for anything else," West said, recapping Monday's transportation committee meeting. "If we do anything besides TxDOT's plan, we've got to find the funding for it. Staff also acknowledged at that meeting that they had not approached our congressional representatives or anyone at the department of transportation to look for funding for an alternative design or for a study for an alternative design."

Detroit recently secured \$100 million from the [Reconnecting Communities Grant](#) to take down a highway, and Dallas staff has not explored whether any such funding can be pursued locally, West added.

Weighing Options Against The "Hybrid Trench"

Dallas Neighbors for Housing, an activist group that has opposed TxDOT's [hybrid trench](#) recommendation, created a [website](#) addressing the matter and has called a public meeting for May 23, the night before the council vote, to rally support for its mission "to replace

I-345 with affordable housing, green space, and targeted economic investment while making reparations to communities harmed by the initial erection of I-345.”

Get to Know Refined Hybrid Option

This design puts the interstate main lanes on a lower level (similar to US 75) and provides existing and new city street connections above. Also includes:

- Wider city streets above I-345
- Enhanced pedestrian and cycling options
- Opportunities for future capping development above the interstate
- Maintains the same number of highway thru lanes within the same footprint and still provides an important south-north connection for the downtown district and regional commuters
- Modified access to improve weaving, safety and way-finding
- This design could also surplus about seven acres of right of way and create around eight acres above the highway for potential capping.**

**Under Texas Administrative Code, surplus highway property is offered at fair market appraisal value first to local governments, then to adjacent property owners. If no takers, it goes to a sealed bid process to the highest bidder.

District 7 resident Sarah Hughes addressed the City Council on Wednesday, saying she drives on I-345 five days a week to get to her job at the nonprofit Parks for Downtown Dallas.

“I’m here ... to urge the City Council to conduct an independent study and not approve TxDOT’s hybrid alternative,” Hughes said. “Something needs to be done with this aging highway — that is for sure — but it is an extraordinary risk to approve a 10-lane trench without solid funding commitment to build decks on top. Without the capping, TxDOT’s plan creates a literal canyon between downtown and Deep Ellum, further separating these neighborhoods.”

Alan Zreet, representing [Downtown Dallas Inc.](#)’s mobility committee, spoke in support of the hybrid option with several prioritized bullet points.

Zreet said the mobility committee wants to prioritize pedestrians, accommodate appropriate infrastructure for future decking, accommodate multimodal connections, improve the street grid and connectivity between downtown and Deep Ellum, minimize impacts to Carpenter Park, and incorporate elements from the Downtown [360 Plan](#) and [CityMAP study](#).

“DDI’s focus to date has been in offering guiding principles to TxDOT and the city for all the options that are on the table,” he said. “We’d like to go on record that DDI does support the TxDOT hybrid alternative on the condition that the above principles are adopted and considered as part of the design as it advances.”

The Future of Interstate 345

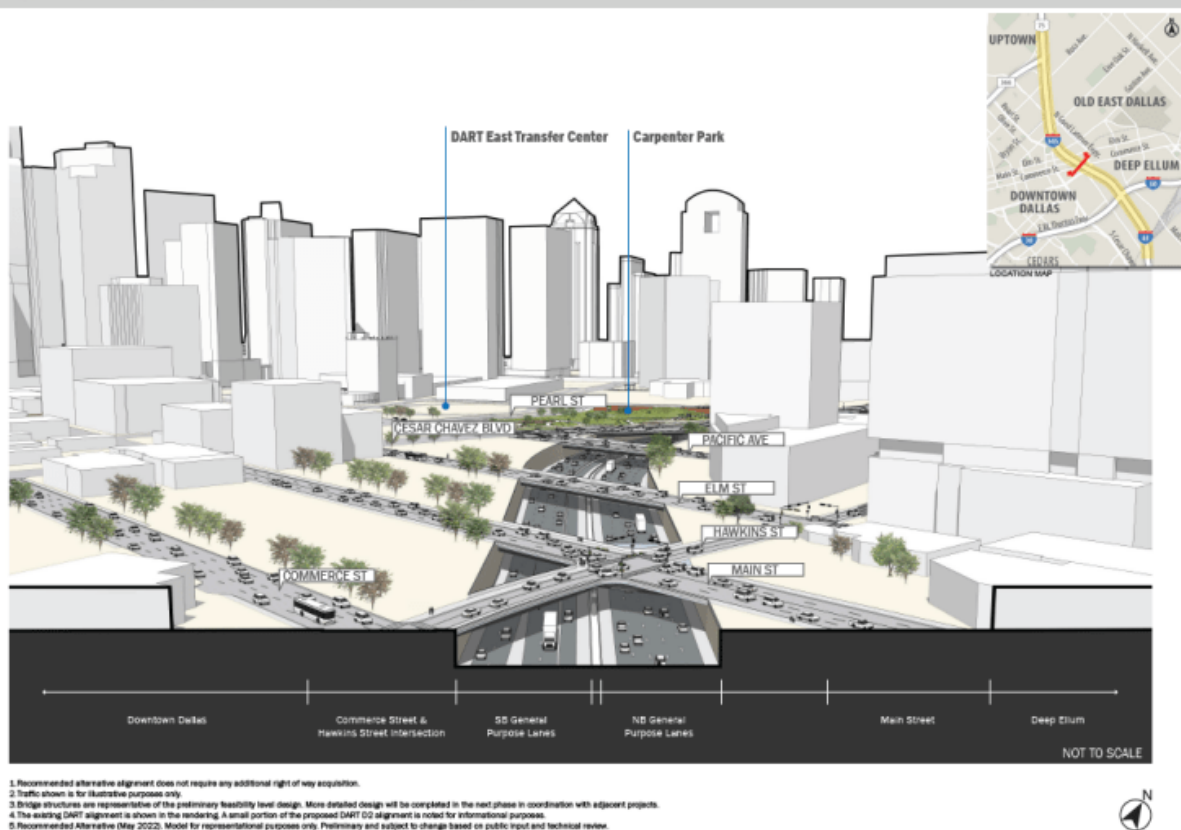
District 2 Councilman Jesse Moreno, who represents Deep Ellum, has shown interest in the “boulevard option,” but Clemens said that’s no longer a possibility.

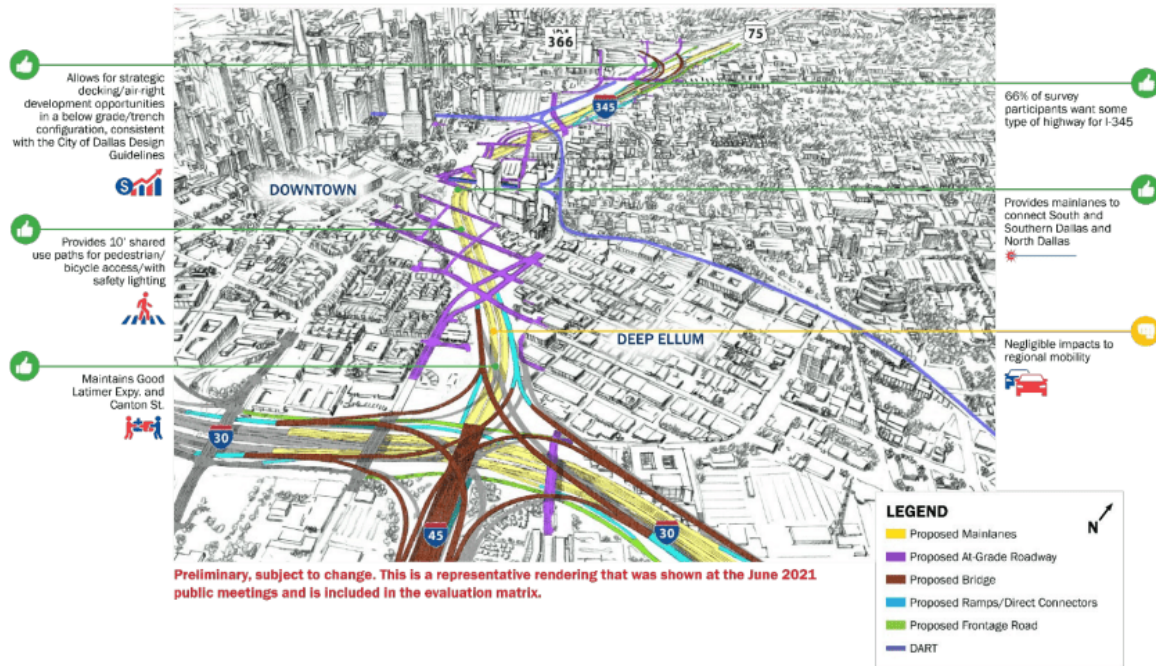
“I was somewhat disappointed in the [May 8 panel](#), which I believe was stacked with only one member supporting an option outside of the hybrid option,” Moreno said. “I believe staff was not prepared for that briefing. We had directors letting us know they’d just learned about this 15 minutes ago and yet they were so adamant about supporting a plan they had not been fully briefed on. I found that concerning.”

Clemens explained that TxDOT has been working on the project for 15 years and construction costs aren’t getting any cheaper.

District 13 Councilwoman Gay Donnell Willis advocated for waiting a year to make a decision, pointing out that city plans, including racial equity, economic development, and environmental documents, have not been considered during the planning of the hybrid option.

“These plans that this body and those before us have been working on — that should be very present in a decision of this magnitude — are just not there,” Willis said. “What I heard {Assistant City Manager Robert Perez} say is that we’ll land on something and line it up and see what works, and we’ll either retrofit or it’ll just fall off. If it doesn’t fit but we’re already charging ahead with this plan, what happens with some of the critical aspects of the hard work that’s been done? I would love to be sitting here in June 2024 soundly showing support and making a decision because we have information that includes what we have put blood, sweat, and tears into ... that very much affects our residents and the future of this city when we are long gone.”





Dallas City Council briefing slides

BILL WOULD ALLOW TEMPORARY CHANGE IN SPEED LIMITS DUE TO CONSTRUCTION, WEATHER ON TEXAS HIGHWAYS

Fox4 Staff

AUSTIN, Texas - A bill is headed to Governor Greg Abbott's desk that would allow for the group in charge of TxDOT to change the speed limit if conditions necessitate it.

[HB 1885](#) written by Texas Rep. Terry Canales (D-Edinburg) passed the Senate on Wednesday after clearing the House earlier this month.

The bill would allow the Texas Transportation Commission to establish a variable speed limit program.

That means the commission could temporarily lower the speed limit by no less than 10 miles per hour the usual speed limit to address inclement weather, congestion, road construction or any other condition that affects "the safe orderly movement of traffic."

A sign must tell drivers about the change between 500 and 1000 feet from where the new speed limit begins.

The bill says that speed limit adjustments could only be put into place after an engineering and traffic investigation.

An investigation of the deadly pileup on I-35W in February 2021 suggested variable speed limits.

READ MORE: [NTSB: 'Deficient' roadway maintenance, speeding drivers led to deadly winter weather pileup on I-35W](#)

Six people died and dozens of others were injured after [a series of crashes involving 135 vehicles on the southbound lanes of the interstate during icy weather](#) on the morning of February 11, 2021.

NTSB investigators recommended Texas install variable speed limit signs.

[Investigators found road sensors detected average speeds above 100 miles per hour](#) in the left lane of the interstate. The speed limit there is 75.

Governor Abbott has not said if he plans to support or oppose HB 1885.

If the bill is signed, the law will go into place on September 1, 2023.

[Bill would allow temporary change in speed limits due to construction, weather on Texas highways \(fox4news.com\)](#)

DESPITE POPULATION BOOM, HAZMAT TRUCK ROUTES IN DFW HAVE NOT BEEN UPDATED IN NEARLY 40 YEARS

By Brian New

DALLAS COUNTY (CBSNewsTexas.com) – Forty miles east of Dallas on Interstate 20, when the lights flash on the commercial motor vehicle inspection station sign, truck drivers are required to pull over. For the trucks selected, for the next 30 minutes, two Texas state troopers will check the engine, the lights, the brakes, as well as ensure the shipping paperwork and hazmat labels match the contents inside.

"We need to know what's on the roadway," explained Texas Department of Public Safety Sgt. Kyle Bradford. "We need to know what kind of hazard it would be to the community if something happened."

Last year, according to U.S. Department of Transportation data, Texas troopers conducted 29,118 hazardous material truck inspections across the state. Troopers cited a violation on nearly a third of the trucks inspected, 9,403 trucks, with 1,736 trucks taken out of service until the violations were fixed.

The top five most common violations had to do with incomplete shipping paperwork and incorrect or missing hazmat warning placards.

These trucks inspections are just one part of a larger safety plan when it comes to the transportation of hazardous material on Texas highways.

With thousands of trucks loaded with hazard material making their way through the Dallas-Fort Worth area every day, a single road accident could be disastrous for nearby neighborhoods.

In the past decade, according to federal transportation data, there's been 266 crashes involving trucks loaded with hazardous material that resulted in monetary damages in Dallas, Tarrant, Collin, and Denton counties. Crashes with reported monetary damages indicate there was an impact on the environment and/or community. These crashes involving trucks carrying hazardous material totaled \$5.8 million in damages.

However, Dan Kessler, the assistant director of transportation for the [North Central Texas Council of Governments](#), said the frequency of accidents involving these trucks is "remarkable small" and credits the steps North Texas leaders have made over the past four decades as a key part of the reason.

In the 1980s, local city leaders, concerned about a potential chemical spill happening in densely populated areas of downtown Dallas and Fort Worth, came up with [designated hazmat routes](#).

At the time, put trucks carrying hazardous material on the outer loops of Dallas and Fort Worth, such as I-635 around Dallas, I-820 around Fort Worth, and I-20.

Over the next four decades, the population of North Texas exploded from from 3 million to 8 million residents yet, the designated hazmat routes have stayed the same.

[\[interactive map\]](#)

Kessler headed up the study on designated hazmat routes for North Texas that were officially adopted in 1985. Today, he still oversees the hazardous material routes.

Kessler said, despite the population growth, the current designated routes remain the best options.

The main goal of the hazmat routes is to ensure trucks carrying hazardous material stay out of the densely populated downtown districts of Dallas and Fort Worth. Kessler points out the routes still achieve that goal today.

Also, by knowing what highways these trucks travel, local first responders can be better prepared and positioned to react to a potential chemical spill.

Plus, there is not a completed further outer loop around the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex for trucks with dangerous chemicals to take.

"I think the thing to remember, and this is the part that is hard to understand, is we don't have a lot of other options," Kessler explained.

Kessler said safer options for the transportation of hazardous material is something regional planners look at all the time. However, the region's latest long-range transportation plan, projected out to 2045, does not include a continuous outer loop. Federal regulations require regional planners to only proposed road projects where funding can be identified. Currently, there is no revenue stream to pay for a new hazmat route.

State troopers advise drivers, especially when traveling on the designated hazmat routes, to be on the lookout for diamond shaped placards on the sides and back of trucks indicating that there is hazardous material onboard. Sgt. Bradford said drivers should give these trucks extra room on the highways to avoid a potential accident.

[Hazardous Materials Markings Labeling and Placarding Guide](#) by [CBS 11 News](#) on Scribd

[Despite population boom, hazmat truck routes in DFW have not been updated in nearly 40 years - CBS Texas \(cbsnews.com\)](#)

5 BIG PLANS THAT COULD BRING EXPLOSIVE GROWTH TO ANOTHER COUNTY NORTH OF DALLAS

Semiconductors and one of the country's largest reservoirs are keys in Grayson County's future.

By Paul O'Donnell

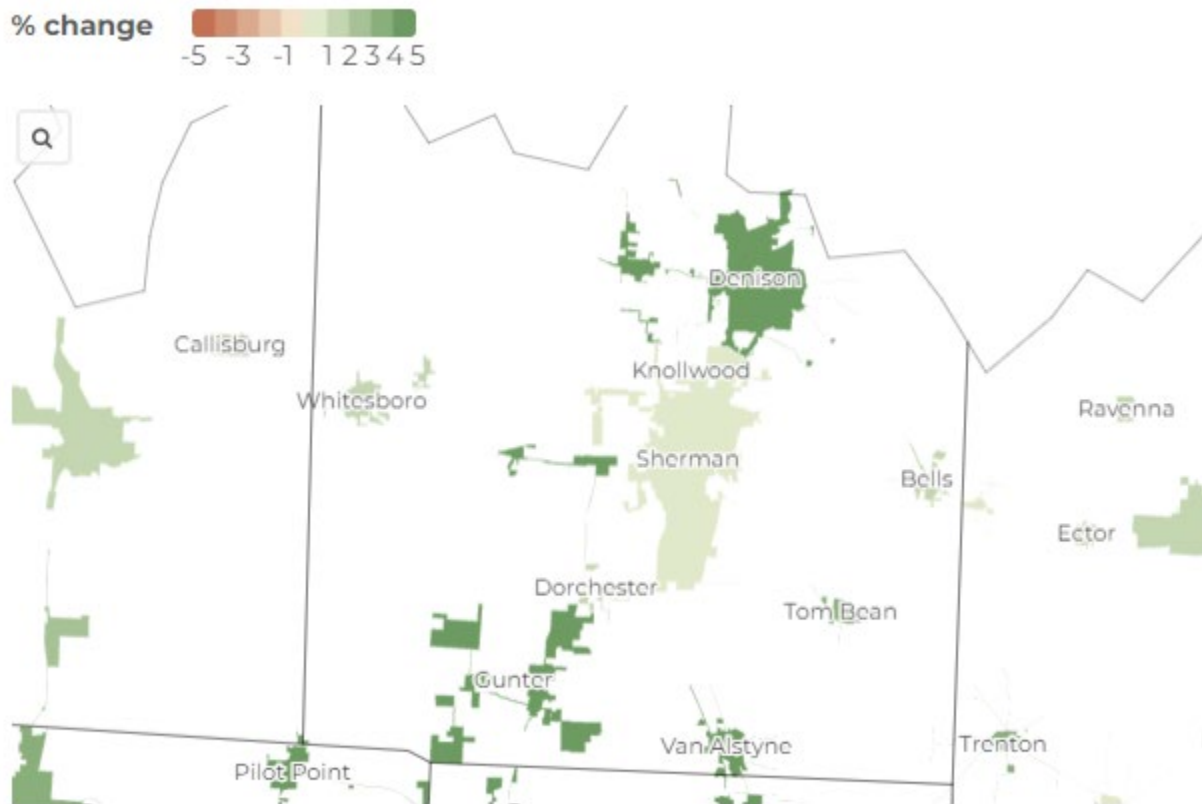
The developer of McKinney's huge Craig Ranch community made headlines this week when it won approval for [a sprawling \\$4 billion development](#) on the Texas side of Lake Texoma.

Developer Craig International plans to build a more than 3,100-acre project on the lake's south shore about an hour and a half north of Dallas. It'll include more than 7,000 residential units, including single-family homes and multifamily, along with a resort hotel, restaurant and marina.

It's the latest big project to surface in Grayson County, the last county on U.S. Highway 75 between Collin County and Oklahoma. As Dallas-Fort Worth development continues to push north toward the Red River, developers and companies are increasingly looking at the once-agricultural county for its abundant land and proximity to the metro area.

GRAYSON COUNTY EXPERIENCES POPULATION, HOUSING EXPLOSION

In two years, Grayson County added around 7,000 residents. The towns of Van Alstyne, Pottsboro, and Gunter experienced the highest percentage growth in population.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 boundaries, U.S. Census Bureau's Vintage 2022 estimates
Map: José Luis Adriano

The Dallas Morning News

Besides the Lake Texoma development, here are other projects with the potential to dramatically change the county's character and drive population growth.

1. TEXAS INSTRUMENTS' SEMICONDUCTOR HUB

The Dallas-based chipmaker broke ground last year in Sherman on a plan to invest [an eventual \\$30 billion in four factories](#) cranking out silicon wafers and chips for some 80,000 products, including cars and industrial machinery, and nearly every device that plugs into a wall or contains a battery. Texas Instruments expects the first factory to begin producing 300mm wafers in 2025.

2. GLOBITECH'S SILICON WAFER PLANT

GlobiTech, a subsidiary of Taiwan-based GlobalWafers Co., [selected Sherman](#) for a [new \\$5 billion plant](#) producing silicon wafers. It'll create 1,500 new jobs. GlobiTech also considered sites in Ohio and South Korea. GlobiTech, [founded](#) in 1999, already builds silicon wafers in Sherman. The new 3.2 million-square-foot plant will be built in four phases.

3. CENTURION AMERICAN'S HUGE LAND BUY

Earlier this year, Centurion American Development – one of North Texas' largest community builders – bought land for a more than [1,500-acre residential development](#) near where the Texas Instruments and GlobiTech projects are being built. The site for Cottonwood, as the new community will be called, is just off U.S. Highway 75 in Grayson County. It's planned to have 4,000 single-family lots, along with 1,450 rental units and 250,000 square feet of commercial and retail space.

4. GUNTER LAND BUYS

Just north of fast-growing Celina, [Gunter is the next town in the path of development](#). Two large land buys took place last fall with the potential to bring hundreds of new homes and retail and offices to the community.

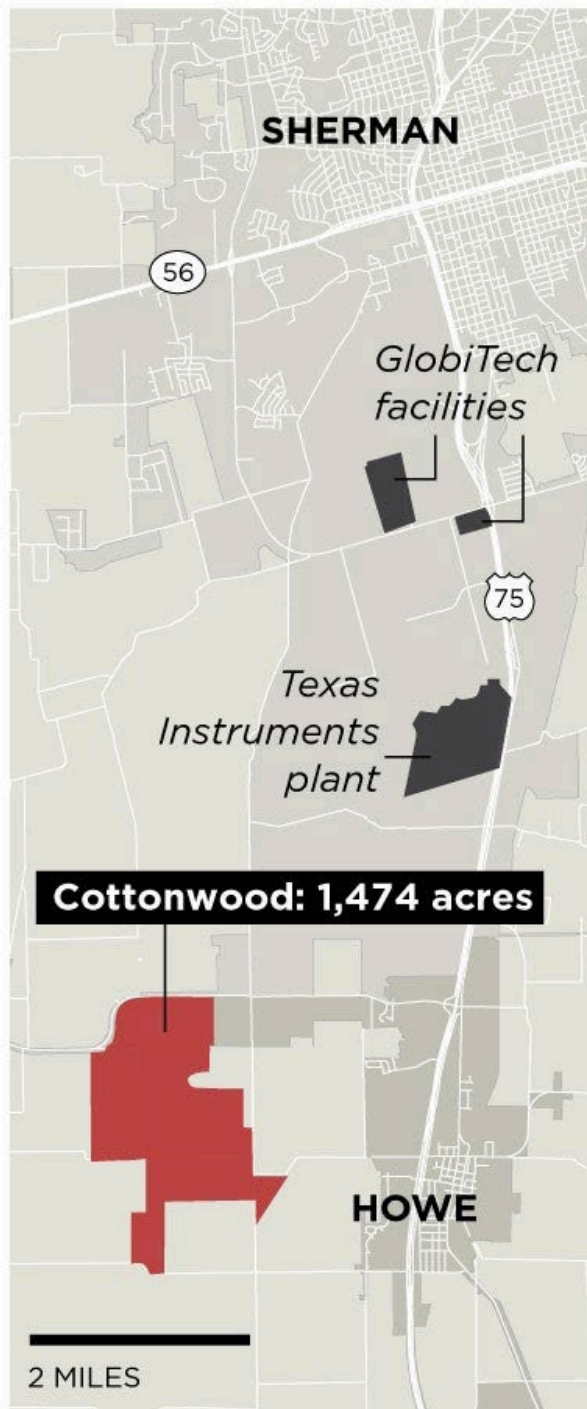
In August, [Centurion American bought Taylor Ranch](#), a 500-acre property west of Preston Road, for a master-planned community. The ranch is near the future extension of the Dallas North Tollway. Gunter, in the southwest corner of Grayson County, is seeing an increase in residential land sales as builders and developers construct thousands of houses to the south in Celina.

In November, [an investor group purchased the 281-acre Platinum Ranch](#) southwest of Gunter. It's also along the tollway's future route. The land is zoned for a master-planned mixed-use project and it's about a mile north of [Legacy Hills, a 3,200-acre community under construction in Celina](#) that will include 7,000 homes.

5. FINISAR'S POTENTIAL EXPANSION

At the end of 2022, Finisar said it's also considering Sherman for a new \$3 billion plant that would produce wafers for semiconductor chips. The company already operates a plant that makes the [specialized lasers in Apple's iPhone facial recognition technology](#) on a nearly 77-acre campus in Sherman.

Grayson County development



Staff Graphic

The new plant would create 700 jobs initially, though that [eventually could grow to 4,000](#). Finisar said Sherman is competing with other company-owned sites in Easton, Pa., Warren, N.J., and Newton Aycliffe, United Kingdom. Construction would begin in 2025, with commercial operations launching in 2028.

BONUS PLAYS

A [new casino recently opened](#) on the Oklahoma side of Lake Texoma.

West Bay Casino & Resort is a Chickasaw Nation gaming casino and hotel overlooking the lake near Kingston, Okla. The 9,600-square-foot casino features 275 slot machines, table games and a restaurant. It has 40 guest rooms and 10 lakefront rental cabins.

The Chickasaw tribe owns and operates [Winstar World Casino and Resort](#), which it markets as [the world's largest casino](#). The 400,000-square-foot gaming floor, resort and soon-to-open Lucas Oil Live entertainment venue in Thackerville, Okla., are a popular destination for Dallas-Fort Worth residents.

The [Choctaw Nation's flagship casino and resort in Durant, Okla.](#), also is just east of Lake Texoma on U.S. Highway 75.

TEXAS LEGISLATURE ON THE VERGE OF ELIMINATING VEHICLE SAFETY INSPECTIONS, BUT FEES WOULD REMAIN

A bill headed for a Senate vote would kill safety inspections but continue to charge drivers state fees. Emissions inspections would still be required in large urban counties

By Scott Friedman

The Texas legislature appeared poised Thursday night to eliminate state vehicle safety inspections.

House Bill 3297, authored by Rep. Cody Harris (R-Palestine), has already passed the Texas House and could receive a Senate vote as early as Friday. If passed, it would be headed for the governor's desk.

But across the state, certified vehicle inspectors are crying foul, warning the bill could put more unsafe cars and Texas roads, and pointing out that, under the current proposal, the state would continue to collect fees from drivers, even after inspections go away.

And, in the DFW area, where the large urban counties are under federal emissions testing requirements, drivers would still be required to get an annual emissions inspection, even if the state safety inspections are eliminated.

For years, Republican lawmakers have had their sights set on killing safety inspections, arguing that they are an inconvenience for car owners and do little to protect drivers.

"If you have bald tires, that's up to you. I mean, it's a personal responsibility. If you have bald tires go replace your tires, Rep. Craig Goldman (R-Fort Worth) told **NBC 5 Investigates** in an April interview. Goldman has helped lead the charge to kill vehicle inspections in this year's legislative session.

But, inspectors who check cars at state-licensed shops counter that cars with bald tires, and bad brakes affect more than just the person behind the wheel of that one car.

"An unsafe vehicle is not only unsafe to the owner of that car and the other occupants, it's unsafe to everybody else on the road", said Greg Cole who heads the Texas Vehicle Inspection Association, which represents state-licensed shops and inspectors statewide.

Cole said those shops help drivers identify critical safety concerns every day.

"We see a lot of unaware people coming in with, 'I didn't know the tires were bad,' they didn't know what a 'wear bar' is," Cole told **NBC 5 Investigates**.

Nationally, studies of state inspection programs have shown mixed results on safety. But in Texas, there are bigger questions about whether it's even possible to evaluate the program's effectiveness because, as a monthslong NBC 5 investigation has shown, the program is riddled with fraud.

Our reporting exposed widespread cheating by inspection shops, falsely passing cars in exchange for cash, according to law enforcement authorities.

One team of investigators in Travis County told **NBC 5 Investigates** they believe as many as five million cars on Texas roads had fake inspections.

“Vehicle was never there, they never checked insurance on it, nothing”, said Sgt. Jose Escribano who heads a special vehicle fraud investigation unit with the Travis County Constables, Precinct 3.

That fraud infuriates legitimate shop owners and leaves some wondering if the effectiveness of inspections has been undercut by cheating.

“So, yeah. How good is the data that we have at that point?” Cole said.

The Texas Department of Public Safety has vowed to crack down on fake inspections in the wake of the NBC 5 investigation.

The DPS director has promised to work with the state’s Commission on Environmental Quality to shore up loopholes in the state’s emissions inspection computer system that make it easier for inspectors to get away with issuing fake passing inspection reports.

But in the legislature, some have argued that cheating is just another reason to kill the program entirely.

“Until you give me the solution of how to get rid of the fraud and abuse that is rampant across the state with fake inspections, then my opinion is the why do we have the inspections at all,” Rep. Goldman said in that April interview.

Some Democrats have pushed back, arguing families could be at greater risk on roads if cars are not checked.

“I mean, there’s a reason why we have inspections. We want to make sure that these cars are safe. We want to make sure that people are, you know, changing their windshield wipers and their tires are good”, said Rep. Ramon Romero (D-Fort Worth).

Even if the inspections go away, the state will still get your money. The current bill would simply convert the \$7.50 inspection fee the state collects to a new charge you would pay when you register your car.

“This is a new tax because there’s no service, no benefit, you know, to the motoring public anymore,” Cole said.

But lawmakers and legislative staffers who support eliminating inspections told **NBC 5 Investigates** the state must continue to collect the fees because the money goes to the state mobility fund which finances transportation projects and lawmakers don’t want the fund to be impacted if inspections are eliminated.

Previous legislative efforts to kill inspections stalled over concerns that the plan would severely impact the financial strength of the mobility fund.

The Texas Senate recessed late Thursday night without taking any action on the inspection elimination bill. There was talk at the capitol Thursday of possible amendments to the bill which might extend the timeline for eliminating safety inspections by a year or two, in order to give inspection shops and state agencies time to adjust.

[Texas Legislature on the Verge of Eliminating Vehicle Safety Inspections – NBC 5 Dallas-Fort Worth \(nbcdfw.com\)](http://nbcdfw.com)

INTERSTATE 30 EXPANSION TO BEGIN RIGHT AWAY

By Brad Kellar

Driving locally will be changed forever, as the largest highway improvement project in Hunt County's history is set to begin in the coming week.

The long-anticipated expansion of Interstate 30 from the current four lanes to six lanes is scheduled to get underway Monday morning, according to an announcement from the Texas Department of Transportation.

The widening of the interstate is just one of the efforts planned along the highway in the next few years, as the state agency and county officials attempt to face rapid population growth.

TxDOT announced the project to widen and improve a portion of I-30 is being undertaken by Austin Bridge & Road Services LP, which was granted 1,033 working days, weather permitting, to complete the project valued at more than \$128 million. The target completion date is April 2026.

This project is scheduled to extend from one mile west of the I-30 / FM 1903 intersection to one-tenth of a mile east of the Monty Stratton Parkway.

The contractor will reconstruct and widen the existing four lanes of I-30 to six lanes; improve intersections at FM 1903, FM 1570, and Monte Stratton Parkway; and reconfigure ramps and widen the frontage roads to convert them to one-way traffic flow.

The contractor anticipates work to convert frontage roads to one-way traffic will begin Monday. The Caddo Mills Police Department has announced that effective Monday, both the north and south service roads will be one-way from FM 1903 to FM 1570.

A concrete barrier will be placed along portions of the frontage roads to aid in the construction of temporary on- and off-ramps at the intersections and to maintain access for travelers.

The contractor hopes to begin work at the Monte Stratton Parkway at the end of May, with a long-term closure of the west-to-east U-turn lane at the intersection.

In early 2024 crews will begin constructing a new overpass at FM 1570, to realign the road on both sides of I-30. This work will require the closure of FM 1570 at I-30 for the duration of 2024. Traffic will be re-routed through the east-to-west U-turn lane at Monte Stratton Parkway.

The contractor also anticipates beginning work at FM 1903 in early 2024. The bridge over I-30 will be lengthened and raised to improve intersection operations. This intersection will remain open while this work is underway, but occasional temporary closures will be necessary.

Travelers along the roadways in Hunt County may encounter night- and day-time closures as the project progresses, officials said. Long-term closures will be posted in advance using roadside message boards.

The I-30 expansion is being coordinated alongside the Hunt County Thoroughfare Plan, a long range project to address roadway infrastructure in the county.

Many of the proposed thoroughfares in the plan are focused on expected growth to the west of Greenville, and included several east/west routes which would be compatible with projects already included under the county's \$24 million 2016 road bond package and TxDOT's plan to expand Interstate 30 between the Rockwall and Hopkins county lines.

The Hunt County plan was also designed to work with similar plans already being adopted by cities in the county, as well as plans and programs of adjacent counties and from the Texas Department of Transportation and the North Central Texas Council of Governments.

The Hunt County plan takes into account the county's current growth of approximately 2% a year, with the county's population to increase by more than 20 percent through 2045.

The most recent update, as presented during the summer of 2021, is available online at <https://tinyurl.com/3w26ym65>

MOBILE APP NEEDED FOR TEXPRESS LANES' HOV DISCOUNT

By Kristi Nelson and Lauren Franklin

Josh Feldman of Dallas reached out to NBC 5 Responds after discovering he wasn't getting the HOV discount on his NTTA TollTag bill even though he was traveling with a passenger during peak traffic hours on the TEXpress lanes.

Feldman found out the hard way that the discount isn't automatically applied. It only works if you, the driver and at least one other passenger have downloaded and registered on the [GoCarma app](#), which launched in 2020.

The app activates automatically while traveling in a TEXpress lane during weekday peak period traffic periods. It uses Bluetooth technology to detect the driver and second passenger needed to qualify for the discount. A transponder device is available if traveling with a child or a passenger without a mobile phone.

You can pay for the lanes using your [NTTA TollTag](#), but the lanes are operated by the [North Central Texas Council of Governments](#). They told us, in part, "...the North Central Texas Council of Governments continues to coordinate with our transportation partners to ensure residents are aware of the process to obtain the 50% peak-period discount."

You can visit the [GoCarma website](#) for more information on how it works and if you have other consumer concerns, reach out to us using our consumer complaint form.

[Here's How to Get HOV Discount With TollTag – NBC 5 Dallas-Fort Worth \(nbcdfw.com\)](#)

VALLEY VIEW MALL IS FINALLY GONE, THE FIRES ARE OUT, AND DEVELOPMENT MAY BE COMING

After 10 mostly contentious years, Valley View is officially gone. City leaders and its developer, Scott Beck, say it's time to turn over a new leaf and start moving dirt.

By Bethany Erickson

As recently as the beginning of May, the lack of development upon the land that held the ruins of Valley View Mall was a bone of contention between the city of Dallas and property owner Scott Beck. Each party blamed the other for its sorry state. But on Tuesday morning, surrounded by city officials, media, and neighbors, the developer sought to bury the hatchet beneath the rubble of the mall that is now being carted off to a landfill.

"We have turned over a new leaf," Beck said during a press conference to announce the first phase of development for the site. "We're not going not be talking about what has happened in the past or hasn't happened in the past. We're gonna just move forward from today ... and we're just excited about the next 10 years."

But it's difficult to not talk about what transpired over the last few months that led to this moment, especially when Dallas City Councilwoman Jaynie Schultz was sitting in the front row. [Just last month](#), Schultz and Beck quibbled about the demolition of the site. Beck frequently blamed Schultz for other issues surrounding the project, including his belief that the city should pay for infrastructure improvements to connect the private property to the city's sewer system. He also denied responsibility after Dallas police labeled Valley View a habitual criminal property following numerous break-ins and three recent fires, one of which sent two firefighters to the hospital.

All of that, Beck and Schultz indicated Tuesday, was in the past. Schultz, who represents Valley View's district, and fellow council members Gay Donnell Willis and Jaime Resendez sounded hopeful that the city would be able to work with Beck.

The journey to Tuesday's parking lot press conference actually began in 2013, when the city first envisioned what it called the Valley View-Galleria Area Plan. That informally became known as Midtown, and the city has since branded the surrounding neighborhood as the Dallas International District.

While the entire district is no longer referred to as Midtown, both Beck and Schultz said that there is room for Dallas Midtown at the Dallas International District (even if it is a mouthful). The entire 440-acre district stretches from the Dallas North Tollway, Lyndon B. Johnson Freeway, Preston and Alpha roads, and includes the Galleria and the now-demolished Valley View site.

"The Galleria is not renaming themselves the International District," Beck said, adding that, "we'll still be called the Dallas Midtown project."

There are now 100 empty acres at Valley View, which also contains parcels owned by Seritage Growth Properties and LTF Real Estate. Beck says his property is just about shovel-ready. Last month, Beck said that the sanitary sewer line had been completed and the storm line work was continuing.

Tuesday, he said that he expected that Anthem Development—[the joint venture firm](#) he created in 2021 with fellow developers Ross Frankfurt and Will McNutt, formerly of Frankfurt Properties—would begin seeking permits for the first phase of development within the next 90 to 120 days. He said they plan to use the Dallas Development Services' specialized Q Team to expedite the review of their plans.

"That process should have us in the ground no later than the first quarter or the beginning of the first quarter," Beck said.

The first phase will be a mixed-use development at Dilbeck Lane and Preston Road, the former mall's main entrance. Frankfurt said the six-story structure would feature 26,000 feet of ground-floor retail, 10,000 feet of amenities space, and 275 luxury residential units.

"We view this project as the much-needed activator that will bring energy to this area and kickstart the entire development," he said. "We couldn't be more excited to get this project going."

Beck said that Beck Ventures owns its 100 acres, debt-free. He expects the first phase to cost \$80 million. "There are multiple term sheets and multiple debt providers that are interested," he said, but qualified the timeline. "Interest rates are rising, and you never know what happens from the marketplace perspective. But as of right now, it's full bore, green light, we're moving forward."

Beck said he would not be seeking assistance from the city for the development, because doing so would require him to include affordable residential units. The area sits in a tax increment finance (or TIF) district, but Beck believes delivering luxury and market-rate units first will juice the tax base and increase the money available to offset the cost of affordable units within the broader 440-acre Dallas International District.

"Nothing's been built here yet, so there's no 'increment' in our TIF, and there's ultimately no funds actually available," he said. By building newer stock at market rate or luxury rate, "you'll have an increment you can actually spend to put in place apartments that have affordability in them."

Attendees for Tuesday's press conference sat in plastic chairs in the middle of a crumbling parking lot. Schultz asked them to envision something different.

"Picture looking at the east at the blocks of pedestrian-friendly shops and restaurants with residences, hotels, and office towers," she said. "Picture Preston Road with a continuous transportation service that enables residents to simply hop on and off as they run their errands. Look west toward Montfort and see the beautiful new street, lined with trees and connectivity to (DART's) Silver Line, which will take North Texans to DFW Airport and bring visitors to the Dallas International District."

High on both Beck and Schultz's discussion points was the Dallas International Commons. It includes a 20-acre park anchored by the city-owned Prism Center on Peterson Lane, and Dallas ISD's planned pre-K through 12th grade International STEAM academy slated to open in 2025. It also has been allocated a \$10 million grant from the North Central Texas Council of Governments that will turn the entire 440-acre area into a transportation innovation zone that plans to include an automated people mover. The latter, along with connections to hike and bike

trails, public transit, and wider sidewalks, are exciting because they will improve walkability for the entire district as well as the Midtown development, Beck said.

It's been 10 long years since Dallas began imagining how to replace the aging mall at Preston and LBJ. With both the literal land and the metaphorical air finally cleared, both Schultz and Beck seem determined to make the next decade's course look decidedly different.

"We're not lighting off any fireworks," Beck said during Tuesday's announcement. "But when we do actually break ground on the first project, we'll invite everybody back."

ARLINGTON OFFICIALS GREENLIGHT NEW GAS WELLS AMID VOCAL OPPOSITION, POTENTIAL LEGAL ACTION

By Haley Samsel

ARLINGTON – The debate over expanded [natural gas drilling in Arlington](#) took center stage May 23 as city council members gave initial approval to two new gas wells at 5720 South Watson Road.

After nearly two hours of testimony from opposed residents and people employed by the natural gas industry, District 3 council member Nikkie Hunter was the lone vote against the permit request by TEP Barnett, the North Texas branch of French energy giant Total Energies.

The company operates 31 drill sites in Arlington, including the Fulson site near Tarrant County College's southeast campus and Fish Creek Linear Park. If TEP Barnett's request to create a larger drill zone earns final approval on June 13, the company can move forward with obtaining the permits it needs to begin drilling in late 2023 or early 2024, according to a city staff report.

[MAP: [5720 S Watson Rd](#)]

Before casting a “yes” vote, District 4 council member Andrew Piel acknowledged the passionate appeals by environmental advocates and residents concerned about the impact of natural gas production on health and air quality. Russ Gamber, a 47-year Arlington resident and retired physician, was among them.

He pointed to studies showing that [25% of Tarrant County children](#) are diagnosed with asthma by age 9 – more than twice the national average. Gamber connected asthma diagnoses to the region's high ozone levels, which are created by emissions from transportation and industrial production, including gas drilling.

“This is a public health issue for some 20% of Arlington's 100,000 children and, I might add, our city's elderly population and those other adults with chronic lung diseases,” Gamber told council members.

However, Piel said the city's hands are tied by House Bill 40, a [2015 state law](#) that prohibits cities from banning fracking or implementing regulations on natural gas drilling that are not “commercially reasonable.” In Arlington, the city has rules for noise control, landscaping, equipment and the required distance between drilling and protected buildings, such as homes, schools and hospitals.

If city council members voted down a gas drilling permit for environmental or health reasons, the city could face a costly lawsuit from TEP Barnett, Piel said.

“I'm going to vote to approve this gas well tonight, but I take no joy in doing so,” Piel said. “I do not do it because I love the gas industry, but because the state of Texas has pointed a gun at this city's head.”

Several TEP Barnett employees, including chief executive officer Dave Leopold, and contractors employed by the company stressed TEP Barnett's commitment to safety and economic contributions to the region. Spokeswoman Leslie Garvis said the company has taken

accountability for gas well incidents in [west Fort Worth](#) and [Arlington](#) over the past three years and addressed underlying issues at those sites.

“What affects the community affects our workforce,” said TEP Barnett employee Taylor Mitchell. “There is no difference between what is important to our company versus what is important to the Arlington communities. We are one and the same.”

Ranjana Bhandari, executive director of environmental advocacy group [Liveable Arlington](#), led a door-to-door effort to gather about 300 signatures [on a petition](#) opposing the two gas well permits. Arguments by organizations ranging from the Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club to consumer advocacy group Public Citizen fell on deaf ears, she said.

“I feel like our government is completely deaf to science, the law and citizens’ experiences,” Bhandari said.

LAWSUIT ON THE HORIZON?

The May 23 hearing was the first time Arlington City Council has held a public hearing on new gas well permits since January 2022, when council members [voted down expanded gas drilling operations](#) at a TEP Barnett site adjacent to an east Arlington day care center and homes.

All drilling permits since then have been approved internally by city staff. The city’s gas drilling ordinance allows staff to approve drilling permits without public input or a council vote, as long as those applications are within previously approved “drill zones,” according to [an investigation](#) by the Fort Worth Report and Floodlight News.

TEP Barnett did not file suit following the January 2022 denial. However, the city did [face a lawsuit](#) from Liveable Arlington and the owner of the day care center. The lawsuit was [dropped shortly](#) after council members denied the permit.

In letters and presentations to the council Tuesday, Jayla Wilkerson, an attorney for Liveable Arlington, raised the prospect of further legal action. She argued that council members should delay a vote until they had more exact measurements of the distance between TEP Barnett’s proposed drilling zone and a nearby home.

Arlington’s ordinance requires a minimum of 600 feet between a drill zone and protected uses, including homes. Any drill zone within 600 feet requires approval from a supermajority of council members.

In this case, Arlington estimated that a home was “approximately 600.1 feet” away from the proposed drill zone. Wilkerson questioned the accuracy of that estimate.

“To avoid costly litigation and other unfortunate consequences of acting too hastily, my client and I implore you to postpone the vote on this (permit) amendment until proper due diligence can be performed to maintain the integrity of your City, its Council, and your processes,” Wilkerson wrote in a May 18 letter to council members.

At council member Rebecca Boxall’s request, TEP Barnett’s drill zone was amended during the May 23 meeting to increase the distance between homes and the new wells.

But Chysta Castañeda, another attorney representing Liveable Arlington, pointed to another looming legal issue for the city of Arlington.

In a May 17 letter, she argued the city should delay consideration of TEP Barnett's request until after a Texas appeals court determines the legality of "allocation wells," or wells that do not have the consent of all mineral rights owners in the area. [A lawsuit](#) against the Railroad Commission of Texas questions whether the agency's practice of issuing drilling permits for "allocation wells" is legal.

The two wells TEP Barnett wants to drill at the Fulson site would be affected by this decision and could be ruled illegal, Castañeda told council members. The Austin Court of Appeals is expected to rule this summer, and further litigation is expected, Castañeda said.

Beyond those legal issues, former Arlington council member [Marvin Sutton](#) argues the city should take action on what it can regulate.

Sutton, who spoke in opposition to TEP Barnett's permit request, said the city's firefighting resources have been stretched thin by population growth and would struggle to handle a gas drilling incident in southeast Arlington. The city could postpone new gas drilling for safety concerns without violating House Bill 40, Sutton said.

"If you don't grow your infrastructure and your safety network, you can't go out and use additional services to fight a gas and oil fire, or explosion," Sutton said. "The city didn't entertain that idea because they only entertained the idea of the (concerns about) gas and chemicals. The safety issue is applicable. Can we put out fires? Can we deliver those services? That's critical."

I-345 IS DEAD, LONG LIVE I-345

The Dallas City Council has voted to support the state's plan to trench the elevated I-345 highway near downtown. Removal appears to be dead. So what comes next?

By Matt Goodman

The Dallas City Council today gave the state of Texas permission to pursue funding to remove and trench I-345, the currently elevated 1.4-mile highway separating downtown and Deep Ellum. The Council's vote was delivered with the energy of a sigh despite weeks of parliamentary backroom wrangling among some council members [who wanted more time to study](#) the plan before approving it.

It was a near impossibility to convince the Texas Department of Transportation to do anything that altered the amount of traffic lanes that slice through Dallas' urban core. TxDOT owns the 50-year-old highway, not the city of Dallas. It is among the shortest on the national highway network, a stub that connects to Central Expressway, Woodall Rodgers, and interstates 30 and 45. It is, more than anything, a concrete connective tissue that allows freeway traffic to flow in all directions, a traffic engineer's dream. TxDOT cites traffic counts of 180,000 cars on the roadway per day. Powerful transportation officials [don't seem capable of imagining a world](#) in which the highway doesn't exist.

Partly that is because they understand the game. Vehicle capacity on highways is the top transportation priority of Gov. Greg Abbott, whose edicts dictate [which projects are funded](#) and [which are not](#).

There have been grassroots calls for nearly a dozen years to remove I-345 and replace it with a boulevard and a reconfigured system of surface streets that would absorb the traffic. But because of its status—a state-owned thoroughfare on the National Highway Freight Network—the city had no power to pursue something so radical. The most the City Council could do was stall by voting against the resolution, a move that had little support among the 14 council members who were present for Wednesday's vote. (Mayor Eric Johnson was absent because he was speaking on a panel about sports in Qatar.)

The City Council voted unanimously to support TxDOT's preference for the highway, which it calls the "hybrid plan," with some caveats.

"This is not a perfect solution, in my opinion, but at the end of the day, what we can say if we support this is that today, TxDOT and the city of Dallas have decided to take down a highway and are going to put something better there in its place," said Councilman Chad West, the loudest and loneliest pro-boulevard voice on the City Council.

The basic plan for the roadway will cost at least \$1 billion, which the state will pay for. First, the highway will come down. The trench that replaces it will be about 65 feet deep. The highway's widest portion will accommodate a total of 10 lanes, which include six north-south traffic lanes and four shoulders, two in either direction. You can see what it will look like in this [TxDOT video](#). Plans include lanes for vehicles entering and exiting the freeway from other highway interchanges and city streets, according to TxDOT spokesman Tony Hartzel. Existing streets will fly over the highway, providing connectivity between the neighborhoods on either side,

similar to Central Expressway. The other freeways that flow into and out of I-345 will be modified to make the ramps on and off the highway easier to navigate.

[VIDEO: [TxDOT Dallas District - I-345 recommended alternative flyover video, May 2022](#)]

Pro-removal advocates focused their argument on the economic development possibilities if the highway were no longer there. TxDOT instead suggested creating a little less than 10 acres of decking over the freeway, which could potentially hold some sort of commercial development or public parks. (Klyde Warren Park is the most often used example.) The so-called “hybrid plan” would eliminate ramps and other infrastructure that frees up another 8 or so acres of surplus right of way that the city could purchase.

The state will not pay for the decking, and Dallas will have to pay fair market rate for the land. City staffers expect it to cost about \$430 million to both acquire the land and design and build deck caps. (The city reached those estimates based on present-day land values near downtown and Deep Ellum and the cost of the decking of Interstate 35’s Southern Gateway project, near the Dallas Zoo.) The North Central Texas Council of Governments, the organization that helps cities and counties find money for large infrastructure projects, vowed to help the city pay for it all.

“We’re good at finding money,” said Michael Morris, the transportation director for the NCTCOG. “We would continue to pledge our support to enhancing as best as this council wishes a hybrid 345.”

Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Omar Narvaez added an amendment to the resolution that gives the city more oversight power and the ability to walk back its support if TxDOT doesn’t do what it has promised. (The city would have to reimburse TxDOT for any engineering work that it has to scrap, however. That could be as much as \$20 million.)

The state will brief Council on progress every six months. The city’s approval is “conditioned” on the state incorporating structural engineering for the decking into the design phase. Council has also directed TxDOT to study rerouting freight and trucks from the freeway. And the city manager is directed to explore federal grants to pay for a study that would explore “alternative design options” that could create a better project.

“Pursuant to the results of the studies and based on the availability of alternate sources of funding, the city reserves the right to fully or partially withdraw its support” of the project, the amendment reads. The resolution also requires TxDOT to ensure that its final plans are in line with the goals set out by recent housing, racial equity, environmental, and economic development policies.

Ceason Clemens, TxDOT’s district engineer, agreed to the city’s language and said the resolution was sufficient to pursue funding for the project and move onto the next design phase. The best-case scenario is that construction begins in five to six years, after the state completes its federally required environmental review and locates construction funding. Construction will take another five to six years.

I-345 became a touchpoint because of its location and its history. The lasso of highways around downtown and Deep Ellum affect connectivity and potential development beyond its immediate area, encouraging sprawl and siphoning activity from neighborhoods like South Dallas. When TxDOT began exploring a future for the highway as it realized how much money it would cost to

maintain it as it aged—the state recently had to spend \$30 million rehabbing the existing structure—urban planners, advocates, developers, this magazine's late founder, and some elected officials began thinking through the possibilities if it were removed.



TxDOT renderings from the CityMap study show what a below grade and boulevard-ed replacement of I-345 could look like.

Like many urban Dallas highways, the construction of I-345 [decimated a thriving Black center of commerce](#). Ross Avenue, near its northern border, was known as North Freedmantown. Deep Ellum and Short North Dallas—another Freedman's town in modern day Uptown—were connected by a sliver of [a Black neighborhood called Stringtown](#). I-345 opened to traffic in 1973, and it was the death knell for these communities and carved into the eastern edge of Deep Ellum.

Instead of this land holding neighborhoods, it has housed a piece of infrastructure that fuels regional transportation despite being located in the downtown of the ninth-largest city in America. As southern Dallas suffered through generations of disinvestment, residents who lived beneath Interstate 30 have now become part of the argument for why the road is necessary: they need it to get to their jobs, officials argued, and the suggestion of anything different could violate their federally protected civil rights. Never mind that highways like I-345 helped fuel the disproportionate investments to the north.

"I-345 should probably have never been built," said Councilman Jaime Resendez, who represents southeast Dallas. "It is a tragedy that it destroyed minority neighborhoods when it was constructed 50 years ago. But turning the highway into a boulevard would not bring those neighborhoods back or guarantee equitable development."

Relying on a highway to access jobs means requiring lower income Dallasites to own a vehicle. As Councilwoman Gay Donnell Willis posed during Wednesday's meeting, what if the city is successful in bringing jobs and economic development to southern Dallas in the coming decades? Would the highway still be essential? "What will our city look like?" she asked.

Morris, the transportation director, spoke frequently of how I-345 is "part of a system." The highways that crisscross Dallas, he argues, are essential to accommodate the growth his organization anticipates in the next two decades. "We're growing at a million people every seven years," he said.

Dallas proper is not. Despite adding nearly 9,000 people last year, Dallas has actually [lost people since 2019](#) and [has stagnated in population since 2017](#). The people are moving to the suburbs. Reversing that trend will be an important challenge for the city of Dallas.

Tuesday night, the evening before the vote, about 60 people packed into the Southern Classic Daiquiri Factory on Ross Avenue, so close to the highway that you could hear the cars hurtling above. The speakers explored a different system, of how communities once flourished where highways now exist. How Central Expressway eliminated Short North Dallas, how I-35 split Tenth Street from the rest of Oak Cliff, how I-30 created South Dallas by separating it from East Dallas.

But it is still trying to fix the damage within the confines of the very infrastructure that transportation planners now rely upon. We can put a park over a freeway, but we cannot bring people back.

Officials from TxDOT's Dallas district have been more collaborative with City Hall than districts in other parts of the state, many stakeholders will say, showing a willingness to work with officials to find ways to depress highways and place bridges and decks atop them instead of simply building a new highway. That's what's happening with Interstate 30. S.M. Wright in South Dallas is being removed and turned into a boulevard, but only because the adjacent Interstate 45 could absorb its traffic. The freeways must stay and cars must move.

After a dozen years, the push to remove I-345 appears dead. But Tuesday night, some of the advocates called for holding the state and city to account by watching and advocating for what goes on those decks and in the excess land. They vowed to keep pressuring the city to push back on the highway, to lift up neighborhoods and people.

"This history is not far, Dallas is a very young city. Which means we have opportunity," said Jerry Hawkins, one of the evening's organizers and the executive director of Dallas Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation. "The opportunity is to determine the identity we want as a city, and I believe that you all believe that is one of justice."

What is good for the region is not always good for the city. Caleb Roberts is an urban planner with a company called Gap Strategies. He lives within a mile of the highway, at Ross Avenue and Hall Street, and was one of 13 public speakers who urged the city to slow the resolution vote and commission an independent study. "This has been miscast as just a transportation issue," he told the Council.

"The biggest weakness right now is a lack of traffic counts in areas that are big enough to build sites on," said his colleague, Paul Carden. "I-345 is draining traffic away from South Dallas."

The push to remove the freeway had foundational goals: bring jobs and housing closer to where people live, connect neighborhoods, focus development on people who have been historically marginalized, improve pedestrian infrastructure, and activate land for which the city could collect new tax revenue.

Now that the City Council has decided to move forward, its next push will be a matter it does have control of: deliver the neighborhoods the necessities—jobs, groceries, healthcare, entertainment—that they apparently need the freeway to access because their communities do not presently have them.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO U.S. 81/287 COULD BEGIN IN 2026

By Jillian Nachtigal

A proposed Texas Department of Transportation project is set to make major changes to roadways in south Wise County.

The project would stretch 10 miles and reconstruct the U.S. 81/287 main lanes from north of Pioneer Road to Avondale Haslet Road. Initially proposed in 2019, the project is anticipated to begin construction in 2026, with an estimated cost of \$454 million.

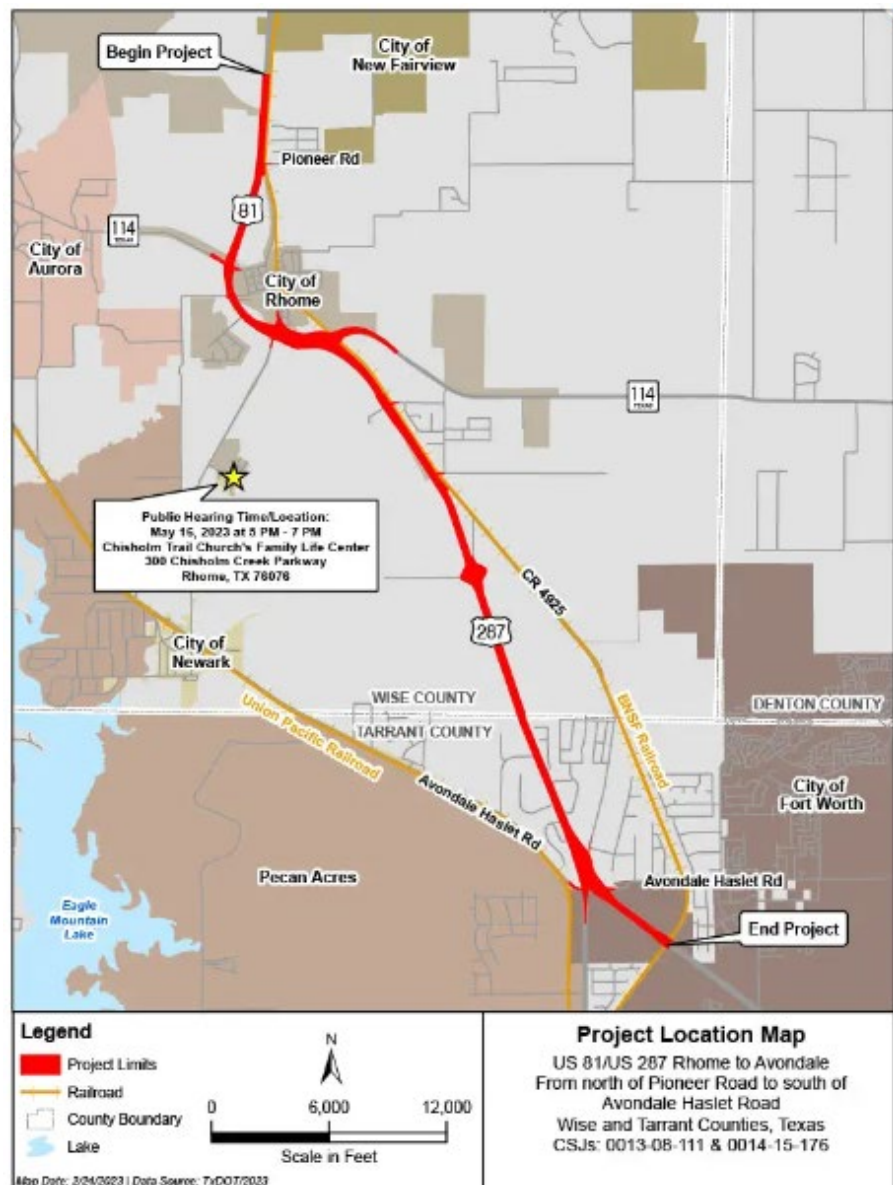
“Barring major setbacks, the project should begin construction in the fall of 2026,” said project consultant Cherish Anderson in a public hearing on May 16. “The project may be constructed in phases through breakout projects based on the availability of funding.”

The project is not currently funded, but TxDOT is working with the North Central Texas Council of Governments to obtain necessary funding.

Benefits of the proposed changes include reduction in crashes and head-on collisions, less potential for wrong-way entry onto main lanes and simplification of the operations of the intersections to reduce delay.

A US 81/287 Rhome project location map indicates the beginning and end points of the project, which spans from North of Pioneer Road to Avondale-Haslet Road for approximately 10 miles

Of the proposed changes, the most pertinent is the reconstructing frontage roads to have two



continuous one-way lanes on either side of U.S. 81/287 and reconstructing four main lanes from north of Pioneer Road to south of Avondale Haslet Road. An additional inside main lane in each direction from south of Avondale Haslet Road to the end of the project would be added.

“Converting the existing two-way frontage roads to one-way frontage roads would enhance both safety and operations within the project corridor, thereby meeting the project need and purpose,” Anderson said.

The presentation references a report from the Texas A&M Transportation Institute on the impacts of converting two-way frontage roads into one-way roads, which found that this type of change results in nearly 60 percent reduction in crashes and improves mobility by approximately 35 percent.

The TxDOT project intends to accommodate higher traffic volumes with minimal right-of-way impacts. The City of Rhome is currently growing at a rate of 5.87 percent annually and its population has increased by 18.65 percent since the most recent census.

At Texas 114 East, the existing northbound U.S. 81/287 to Texas 114 direct connector would be reconstructed to increase the design speed with a larger and safer curve.

In addition, three new interchanges would be constructed with a new underpass at Ramhorn Hill Road, and overpasses at County Road 4840 and North Star Parkway. The interchanges at Pioneer Road, Texas 114 West, Farm Road 3433 (South Main Street) and Avondale Haslet Road would also be reconstructed.

A major design change is proposed for Texas 114 West/BC Rhome and U.S. 81/287 which includes a “diverging diamond” interchange that is designed to handle high traffic volume through the cross street and for left-turning traffic from the frontage road to the cross street.

“While DDIs are a relatively new design, several DDIs have been constructed and operate successfully in Texas, with the closest examples being in The Colony on State Highway 121... at South Colony Boulevard and on I-35 at Ranch to Market 1431 and University Boulevard in Round Rock,” Anderson said.

No residential or non-residential displacements are anticipated, according to TxDOT, and each impacted property owner is offered compensation for the property needed for the project.

Public comments regarding the project are being accepted until June 2. Questions and comments can be submitted via email to Saba.ElHawi@txdot.gov, mailed to the TxDOT Fort Worth District Office, or sent online through the project website by going to www.txdot.gov and searching keyword “U.S. 81/U.S. 287 Rhome.”

BILL TO ELIMINATE PAPER LICENSE PLATES IN TEXAS PASSES TEXAS SENATE

Texas Senate passes a bill that would replace paper temporary tags with metal license plates

By Scott Friedman

Texas is just two steps away from eliminating paper license plates.

Late Wednesday afternoon, the Texas Senate voted 30-1 to pass a bill that would replace paper temporary tags with metal license plates.

The bill is now headed back to the Texas House where, if members concur with Senate amendments, the bill will head for Gov. Greg Abbott's (R) desk.

A yearlong series of reports from **NBC 5 Investigates** led to calls for change. Our series, "[Paper Tag Nation](#)" exposed how criminals obtained car dealer licenses so they could access the Texas DMV's online system and then print and sell fraudulent paper tags.

Some of those tags were then used on cars involved in serious crimes.

State Sen. Royce West (D-Dallas) told the Senate that passage of the bill would deliver a blow to organized crime.

Over the last year, the Texas DMV has implemented new security measures and suspended dozens of licensed car dealers suspected of using the state's own system to sell fraudulent tags on the black market.

But as the DMV cracked down, counterfeiters stepped in making and selling entirely fake tags and capitalizing on the widespread confusion created by the proliferation of fraudulent tags printed out of the DMV's system.

PREVIOUS REPORTS

- March 27, 2023- [Texas DMV's New Paper Tag Design Easily Counterfeited, Police Say](#)
- Nov. 17, 2022 - [Texas DMV Redesigns Paper License Tags to Include New Security Features](#)
- Nov. 15, 2022 - [Police Searching for Paper Tagged 'Ghost Car' in Deadly Grand Prairie Chase](#)
- June 1, 2022 - [Police Make Bogus Tag Bust Tied to Social Media Ads](#)
- May 18, 2022 - [TxDMV Names New Executive Director Amid Paper Tag Crisis](#)
- May 17, 2022 - [Vehicle Used in Dallas Salon Shooting Had Paper Tag](#)
- May 12, 2022 - [Ads for Fake Tags Persist, Despite Facebook, TxDMV Efforts](#)
- May 4, 2022 - [Texas' Paper Tag Problem Compounded by Small Dealers Misusing Them](#)
- May 3, 2022 - [Dallas Police Shut Down Accused Fake Paper Tag Dealer](#)

- April 26, 2022 - [Texas House Set to Hold Paper Tag Hearings](#)
- April 14, 2022 - [Texas DMV Cracks Down on Dealers Selling Temporary Paper Tags](#)
- April 13, 2022 - [TxDMV Closes Inspection Loophole That Put Unsafe Cars on Roads](#)
- April 12, 2022 - [Dallas Police Go Undercover to Fight Illegal Paper Tags](#)
- April 7, 2022 - [Police Warn of Fake Paper Tags Used to Cheat Car Buyers](#)
- April 5, 2022 - [Texas Senate Will Investigate Illegal Paper Tag Crimes, Smuggling](#)
- March 9, 2022 - [Texas Paper Tag Crime Danger Extends Nationwide](#)
- March 5, 2022 - [Texas House Will Hold Hearings on Paper Tag Mess](#)
- Feb. 28, 2022 - [License to Smuggle: Drug Cartels and Human Smugglers Use Paper Texas Tags to Evade](#)
- Feb. 15, 2022 - [Fort Worth Police Announce Special Operation Targeting Paper Tags](#)
- Feb. 14, 2022 -- [Crash Victim's Parents Want More Cops to Police Paper Tag Fraud](#)
- Feb. 13, 2022 - [More Funding Need to Fight Criminals Using Bogus Paper Tags: Police](#)
- Feb. 10, 2022 - [Police Report Drop in Fraudulent Tags But Warn Crooks Are Adapting](#)
- Feb. 9, 2022 - [Texas DMV Shuts Down Six More Dealers Suspected of Selling Paper License Tags](#)
- Feb. 7, 2022 - [TxDMV Director Resigns Amidst Paper Tag Mess](#)
- Jan. 27, 2022 - [TxDMV Takes Emergency Action to Keep Crooks From Selling Paper Tags](#)
- Jan. 21, 2022 - [Dallas Police Operation Targets Fraudulent Paper Tags](#)
- Jan. 17, 2022 - [Recording Shows Police Warned TxDMV of Paper Tag Security Flaw Years Ago](#)
- Dec. 16, 2021 - [DMV Committee Recommends Fingerprinting Some Dealers to Slow Paper Tag Fraud](#)
- Dec. 14, 2021 - [Texas House Transportation Chair Vows to Stop Paper Tag Fraud](#)
- Dec. 6, 2021 - [Texas DMV Boss Deflects Blame for Paper Tag Debacle](#)
- Nov. 23, 2021 - [Illegal Paper Tags Costing Texas Taxpayers and Toll Roads Millions](#)
- Nov. 10, 2021 - [Suspected Paper Tag Peddler Shut Down Tuesday, Reopens Wednesday: Investigators](#)
- Nov. 8, 2021 - [How Texas Paper Tags Became a \\$200M Criminal Enterprise: NBC 5 Investigates](#)

[Bill to Eliminate Paper License Plates in Texas Passes Senate – NBC 5 Dallas-Fort Worth \(nbcdfw.com\)](#)

COLLIN COUNTY'S POPULATION IS ON ITS WAY TO APPROACHING DALLAS' AND OTHER KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE 2023 TEXAS DEMOGRAPHIC CONFERENCE

By Davie Nguyen

The state has gained over 1,290 new Texans per day since the pandemic, according to Tuesday's livestream of the *2023 Texas Demographic Conference*.

"Texas added more population than any other state. We added almost 4 million," Dr. [Lloyd Potter](#), Texas State Demographer, said.

While the [state continues to experience net-domestic migration from other areas in the U.S. and rural parts of Texas](#), The Texas Triangle, which consists of the state's core urban areas of Austin, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio, comprise about 87% of the population in Texas, due to their significant growth.

"That highlights a dichotomy in terms of population density, and dynamics where west of I-35, where we're losing population in many of the counties at the same time," Dr. Potter said. "These counties and the population triangle is really driving us to be the most significant state of the country."

HERE ARE FIVE KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE CONFERENCE:

INFRASTRUCTURE

Dr. Potter correlated the significant population growth to expanding concerns and implications tied to infrastructure. There are needs for more roads, highways, transportation, schools, and retail stores to match the rapid pace of growth.

"When you have people, you need to have stuff to move them around like roads. You need to have water, you need to have power, and those are some of our biggest challenges I would say going forward and will continue to be," Dr. Potter said.

GROUND WATER

While population density impacts the urban core areas, it is causing rippling effects in rural areas, especially since most of West Texas' agriculture is dependent on ground water.

"Those sources of ground water dry up. Essentially, we have real risk in terms of growing cotton and cows – often referred to as food and fiber," Dr. Potter said. "If you look at West Texas, its very dependent on that. And with dry up of water and the lack of ability to move water out there, it's going to potentially impact West Texas [in a] really negative way."

DIVERSITY

The minority population drove the population growth comprising approximately 95.3% of the change over the past decade. According to the *2021 American Community Survey* survey, the Latino population with 40.2% is larger than the non-hispanic white population of 39.4% in Texas.

The Black or African-American accounts for 11.6% of the state's population. The Asian population has also been fast-growing, now making up 5.1% of the state's population.

MIGRATION FROM OTHER STATES

Most of the net-migration is coming from Californians migrating over to Texas due to cost of living and quality of life, while the skilled labor force is coming from California, Illinois, New York, and internationally.

SELF-DRIVING DELIVERY TRUCKS ARE ALREADY ON NORTH TEXAS HIGHWAYS. HOW SAFE ARE THEY?

By Jenny Rudolph

For anyone who likes to complain about North Texas drivers, it might sound alarming to know that soon you'll be sharing the highways with transport trucks that don't have a driver at all.

The Metroplex has quietly become the new frontier for the development of autonomous trucking, with several companies from around the world setting up operations here — and using North Texas highways for real-world testing.

For now, these delivery trucks making stops at Sam's Clubs, Krogers and other destinations do have a human behind the wheel — a safety driver in case of emergencies or technology glitches. Soon, that will no longer be the case.

The worsening shortage of people to fill trucking jobs is fueling a race among companies to bring to market a dominant driverless technology for the future of moving goods on the nation's highways. Several of the largest industry players are now in North Texas, lured by the region's central location on the transportation network and the state's looser regulations.

But that also has some experts worried about just how safe driverless trucks really are, given the technology is so new. An added concern for North Texas is that the companies are testing their trucks on highways here.

FORT WORTH: A NEW HUB FOR AUTONOMOUS TRUCKING

In Fort Worth's Near Southside neighborhood, [Volvo Autonomous Solutions](#), a division of the Swedish car manufacturer, opened an office in April focused on commercializing, selling and delivering autonomous solutions globally.

The office at 401 Bryan Ave. will start Volvo's U.S. highway activities aimed at transporting goods to and from customer hubs on long-haul trucks.

In partnership with self-driving technology company Aurora, Volvo plans to get a fleet delivering on one lane between Fort Worth and El Paso, and another between Dallas and Houston.

To the north, AllianceTexas is home to a Mobility Innovation Zone, which allows for the testing, scaling and commercialization of new technologies. Experts say the zone gives Fort Worth a shot at becoming the [Silicon Valley of mobility and innovation](#).

Autonomous deliverer [Gatik](#) expanded to Alliance in mid-2021, where it operates a research and development facility and North Texas operations hub. With offices in Canada and California, Gatik specializes in middle-mile deliveries up to around 300 miles round-trip.

Gatik's self-driving trucks deliver to more than 30 Sam's Club locations in the Metroplex. It recently went live with Kroger, moving goods from customer fulfillment centers to grocery stores across North Texas.

Alliance also is home to self-driving trucking companies [TuSimple](#), based in San Diego, and the Swedish company [Einride](#).

Meanwhile, Google subsidiary [Waymo](#) is testing self-driving trucks on Interstate 45 between Fort Worth and Houston, and California-based [Kodiak Robotics](#) operates most of its self-driving operations out of Dallas.

WHY ARE ALL THE KEY PLAYERS COMING TO NORTH TEXAS?

Ian Kinne, director of logistics innovation at AllianceTexas developer Hillwood, said Texas has been the prove-it state for the industry. Kinne said he thinks the state wants to understand the technology and work with these companies to help them commercialize.

“DFW has really become the spot for autonomous trucking in the U.S.,” Kinne said.

Texas is attractive to these companies because of its limited regulation, and because a lot of freight is already moving on its highways.

Texas does not require autonomous trucks to have a safety driver, but Kinne said most companies still use one to “promote safety in the remote chance an issue occurs.”

Kinne said safety is the first thing many of the autonomous trucking companies talk about. And, he said, wide-scale adoption of autonomous driving will be a gradual process.

While some states have different rules on testing and deploying autonomous trucks, Texas is very hands off on regulation, experts say. Texas’ regulatory environment means we could see more of these trucks on our roads.

But that’s concerning to [Philip Koopman](#), a professor at Carnegie Mellon University who has been working on self-driving car safety for more than 25 years.

Autonomous trucking companies decide for themselves when they think their vehicles are safe enough to operate on public roads, Koopman said.

“The government probably made that decision for jobs and economic growth,” Koopman said.

“But the cost of that decision is you’re potentially putting other road users at risk, and there’s no way to figure out how safe it is. That’s the trade-off that’s been made.”

“The government probably made that decision for jobs and economic growth,” Koopman said.

“But the cost of that decision is you’re potentially putting other road users at risk, and there’s no way to figure out how safe it is. That’s the trade-off that’s been made.”

“One hopes the companies are responsible,” Koopman said. “Some have proven they are. Some have proven they are not. Under that kind of financial pressure, even the best leadership might find themselves with pressure to deploy even if they’re not ready. That’s a tough position to be in.”

Koopman said he would prefer to see external oversight that would relieve that pressure on companies to decide when is safe to remove the driver from behind the wheel.

HOW DO SELF-DRIVING TRUCKS WORK?

While companies’ techniques in mastering autonomous trucking vary, there are some common overlaps. Many companies use computer mapping to plan the path of a self-driving truck.

In the case of Volvo, sensors log data while driving on a road that helps a computer understand the surroundings.

Ceren Wende, the head of marketing and communications for Volvo Autonomous Solutions, said the company can then simulate pop-up scenarios that would change road conditions. These include construction zones, weather and obstacles like animals or the occasional pedestrian.

“We repeatedly train the virtual driver and hardware on these different scenarios and validate the results with real-world driving so we know that the vehicle will behave safely in these situations,” Wende said.

Meanwhile, Gatik’s trucks are in continual two-way communication with the company’s remote monitoring centers. Richard Steiner, Gatik’s head of policy and communications, said from there, employees monitor the fleet and can provide remote assistance if there is a lane closure or unexpected construction.

“Gatik’s remote supervision system has been developed to leverage human intuition, which ensures our autonomous fleet remains fundamentally independent, while safeguarding certain advantages of human-to-vehicle collaboration,” Steiner said.

While maps do a lot of the heavy lifting, they’re not necessarily foolproof, experts say. Self-driving expert Koopman said one problem is making sure frequently changing construction zones get updated on computer maps.

“People will say they’re going to put all the construction zones on a map, but the first vehicle to see a construction zone doesn’t know it’s there,” Koopman said. “That can help other vehicles after the first one, but if that first vehicle is an automated truck, and it doesn’t know how construction zones work, you’ve got a problem.”

One thing Koopman is not worried about is autonomous trucks merging and changing lanes. Most companies have spent considerable time teaching their vehicles to merge with the right amount of assertiveness based on the culture of the city to match prevailing traffic conditions, he said.

Koopman does worry about unusual things that happen on the ride, like overturned vehicles, bicyclists, crossing animals, grass fires and emergency vehicles. While the industry promotes safety, Koopman argues, there is not tangible proof or data to support autonomous trucks being safer than human drivers.

“They could be safer — I’d be delighted if they were — but we don’t know,” Koopman said. “We can’t set policies assuming they’re safer, because there’s no data.”

Despite his safety reservations, Koopman acknowledged the U.S. trucking industry’s labor shortage is a legitimate reason to pursue autonomous technology. The [American Trucking Associations](#) estimated a shortage of [nearly 78,000 drivers last year](#) and projects the [shortage could surpass 160,000 drivers](#) by 2030.

Meanwhile, leaders across the industry affirm safety is their main priority, and while North Texas trucks may still have a safety driver inside the vehicle, that’s not the case everywhere.

HOW SOON WILL WE SEE TRUCKS WITHOUT A HUMAN DRIVER?

Before coming to North Texas, Gatik began operations with food retailer Loblaw in Canada and went fully driverless last year.

The company also began commercial operations with Walmart in Arkansas, where the retailer is based, in June 2019. Gatik pulled the safety driver out of its trucks in August 2021, Steiner said.

“Safety is table stakes, front and center of everything we do,” Steiner said. “It runs deep within the fabric of the company. We always commence operations with a safety driver on board for safety, validation and verification purposes as we ramp up towards driver out on every single new route.

It took about two years to go driver-out in Arkansas, and about 19 months to go driver-out in Canada, Steiner said.

“As we ramp up towards driver-out with our customers in Texas, that timeline will continue to shrink,” Steiner said.

Steiner said Gatik is looking to remove drivers from vehicles in North Texas by 2024.

Volvo’s Sasko Cuklev, head of on-road solutions, could only say his company is “getting close.”

“We don’t have all the answers,” Cuklev said. “There is a transformation ongoing. We of course want to be part of that, but also learn along the way what is feasible and what is not.”

Cuklev said the race is not to necessarily be first on the road, but rather to develop an industrialized, safe and scalable solution that is commercially viable. Volvo has an ambition to be “one of the winners here,” Cuklev said.

“Everything we do, we do with safety in mind, and we will never compromise on that,” Cuklev said.

FINAL APPROVAL GIVEN TO BILL ALLOCATING \$1.5 BILLION TO BROADBAND EXPANSION IN TEXAS

Voters will be asked to approve a state constitutional amendment to create the Broadband Infrastructure Fund.

By Jayme Lozano Carver

Texas lawmakers made the biggest investment for broadband development in state history Sunday with a bill allocating \$1.5 billion to an infrastructure fund that is meant to expand internet availability in a state where 7 million people lack access to the service.

The legislation cleared the House and Senate on Sunday and is now headed to Gov. Greg Abbott.

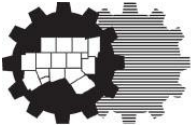
[House Bill 9](#), filed by Rep. [Trent Ashby](#), R-Lufkin, would create the Texas [Broadband Infrastructure Fund](#). The bill is accompanied by [House Joint Resolution 125](#), which proposes a constitutional amendment that would require voter approval to create the fund.

“This represents a historic investment in connectivity infrastructure to meet the technological demands of the future,” Ashby told lawmakers Sunday. “And reaffirms our belief that all Texans deserve access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet.”

The final version of the legislation fell short of what Ashby initially proposed. The original bill would have allocated \$5 billion to the fund, but the budget approved by the Legislature pared it to \$1.5 billion. That is also significantly less than the amount Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar said the state needed to get fully connected — [\\$10 billion](#) — when he testified at the Capitol earlier this year.

The Broadband Infrastructure Fund will help pay to develop and finance broadband and telecommunications services and 911 services, as well as providing matching funds for federal money from the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program, among other items.

Expanding broadband in Texas has been an ongoing mission since the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted disparities in the state. In the 2021 session, the Legislature established the Broadband Development Office, which released its broadband development [map](#) earlier this year. According to the [map](#), most urban areas of the state have broadband available, while most rural areas have slow service or none at all.



**North Central Texas
Council of Governments**

PRESS RELEASE

Contact:

Brian Wilson

(817) 704-2511

bwilson@nctcog.org

Kevin Kokes

(817) 695-9275

kkokes@nctcog.org

North Texans Encouraged to Bicycle to Work, Other Places in May

Bike Month offers many opportunities to support active transportation

May 9, 2023 (Arlington, TEXAS) – On a typical morning, most North Texans get in their cars and drive to their destinations. Whether they are going to work, dropping the kids off at school or running errands, the day usually starts behind the wheel. There are opportunities throughout May to try something different. May is Bike Month.

Take a spin around the neighborhood. Explore a nearby trail. Even ride your bike to work.

This year, there are two separate Bike to Work Day observances for North Texans to consider. Dallas Area Rapid Transit is holding a local event May 12 with giveaways and free snacks from 7-9 a.m. at the following four rail stations: Akard, CityLine/Bush, Downtown Garland and Parker Road. For details, visit www.dart.org/bikes.

In addition to the DART event, the League of American Bicyclists is giving workers the chance to extend their focus on bicycling into the next week. National Bike to Work Week begins May 15, concluding with Bike to Work Day on May 19.

Even if people find it difficult to ride their bicycles to work, they could take advantage of the milder weather and explore some of the region's more than 800 miles of off-road trails during lunch or ride to a nearby coffee shop to meet a friend.

Some North Texans may still be looking for ways to pedal to work despite living far from the office. They could use their bicycles for the first and last miles of their trips, riding to and from the nearest transit stop. All three of the region's public transportation providers allow bicycles on their buses and trains.

May is also National Bicycle Safety Month, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration urges bicyclists and motorists to share the roadways by obeying traffic laws and respecting each other's rights. The safety of all roadway users is an important emphasis area in North Texas and across the state. For more on the North Central Texas Council of Governments' bicycle and pedestrian safety campaign, visit www.lookouttexans.org.

Whether you take a ride for fun or decide to pedal to work, May is a great time to become more active. For more on Bike Month, plus safety tips to follow when preparing for a bicycle commute, visit www.nctcog.org/biketowork.

About the North Central Texas Council of Governments:

NCTCOG is a voluntary association of local governments established in 1966 to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit and coordinating for sound regional development. NCTCOG's purpose is to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments and to help them recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication and make joint decisions.

NCTCOG's purpose is to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments and to help them recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication, and make joint decisions. NCTCOG serves a 16-county region of North Central Texas, which is centered on the two urban centers of Dallas and Fort Worth. Currently, NCTCOG has 229 member governments including 16 counties, 169 cities, 19 school districts and 27 special districts.

#



North Central Texas
Council of Governments



PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Brian Wilson
(817) 704-2511
bwilson@nctcog.org

Kimberlin To
(817) 608-2362
kto@nctcog.org

Commit to a Better North Texas on Clean Air Action Day

Improve health, clean the air, take the pledge

May 30, 2023 (Arlington, TEXAS) – Despite improvements in air quality, Dallas-Fort Worth still does not meet the federal government’s standards for ozone pollution. North Texans have an opportunity to help boost the region’s air quality, and they can do it without making significant changes. Clean Air Action Day will take place on June 2 this year.

This day is a chance for residents and employers to consider small changes to their routines that might help enhance air quality throughout Dallas-Fort Worth. Ten counties in the region (Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant and Wise) are in nonattainment for ozone, and attention should be paid to air quality all year. But summer is the height of ozone season, when temperatures typically soar.

Better air quality can be achieved in a variety of ways such as working from home, finding an alternative commute, limiting unnecessary idling or even taking lunch to work. For a full list of clean air strategies individuals, businesses and governments can enact to help the region move closer to attainment, and to take the pledge to complete one action to benefit regional air quality, visit www.airnorthtexas.org/cleanairactionday. Additionally, signing up for air quality alerts at <http://www.airnorthtexas.org/signup> can keep you informed of when action is required.

North Texans are encouraged to maintain their Clean Air Action Day commitment made on June 2 throughout all of ozone season, which ends Nov. 30. Be sure to use #CAAD2023 and tag @NCTCOGtrans on social media to show your commitment to clean air in your community and to get others involved.

Start taking steps to ensure better air quality for all North Texans by choosing the clean air strategy that works for you. Every small change made can have an impact on quality of life throughout the region.

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About Air North Texas:

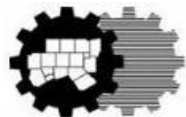
Air North Texas is a regional air quality partnership and general public outreach effort. Air North Texas leverages existing resources and program strengths to offer the public a comprehensive resource for air quality information. Collaborative efforts focus on reducing harmful emissions, protecting public health and welfare, motivating residents to make choices that improve air quality and preserving the economic vitality of the region. Learn more at www.airnorthtexas.org.

#

PROPOSED NATIONAL JUNETEENTH MUSEUM PARTNERSHIP

Regional Transportation Council

June 8, 2023



North Central Texas
Council of Governments
Transportation Department

BACKGROUND

- National Juneteenth Museum proposed to be located in Fort Worth on Rosedale Street east of IH 35W
- The community has requested regional funding for associated infrastructure:
 - Roadway
 - Sustainable Development/Parking/Land Use
 - Transit
 - Technology
 - Optimal Use of Green Space (i.e., public park)
- Supports City of Fort Worth investments/neighborhood revitalization projects (e.g., Evans and Rosedale Redevelopment project) in the same area



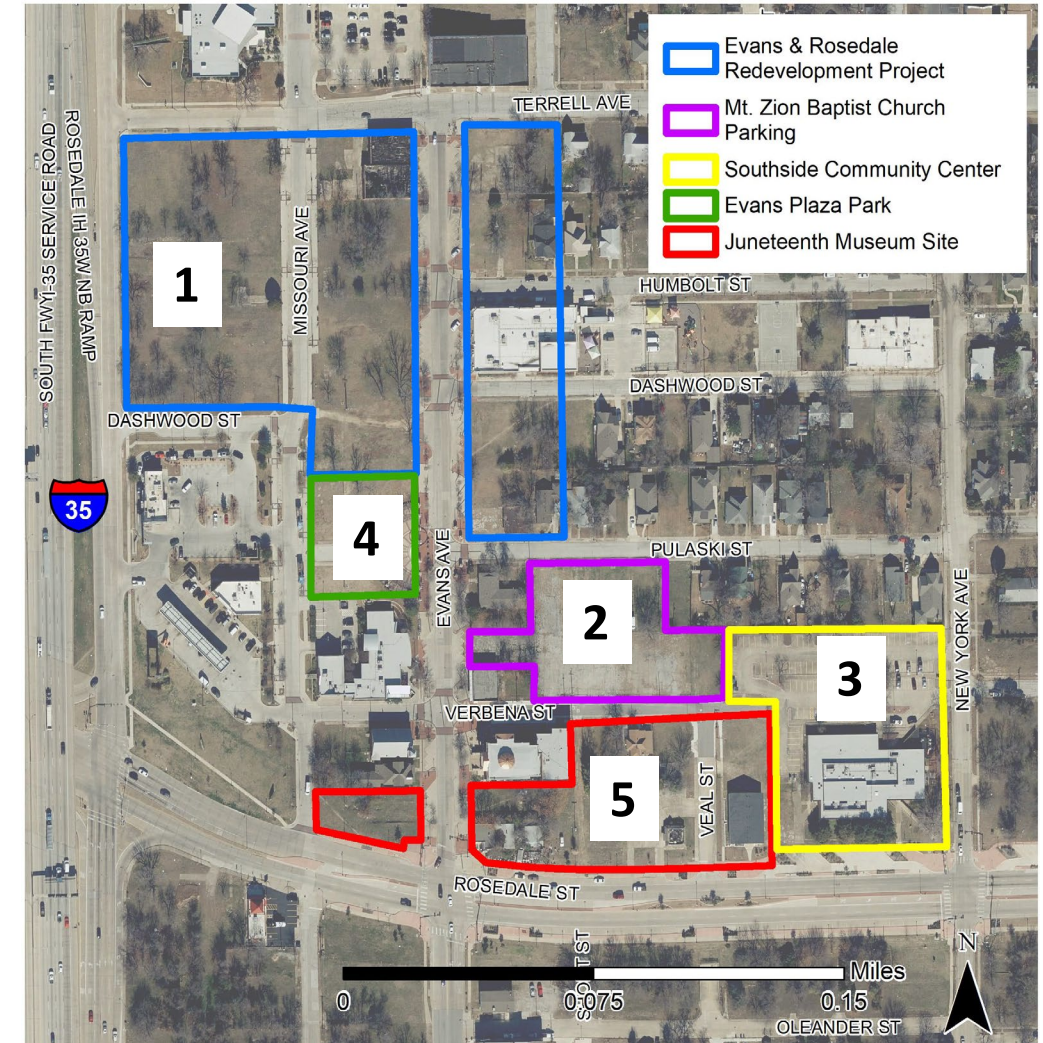
Source: National Juneteenth Museum

METHODOLOGY

- Reviewed construction elements related to transportation items for transit access, vehicular circulation, and landscaping/streetscaping
- Financial participation would involve traditional funding grants with the City of Fort Worth and/or Trinity Metro administering the funding

DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

- City of Fort Worth Evans & Rosedale Redevelopment Project (#1)
 - City providing \$9 million public partnership with ~\$70 million from private developer, Hoque Global
 - At least 370 housing units (20 percent of them affordable), retail space, and a grocery tenant
 - Parking garage and surface lots, 400+ spaces
- Mt. Zion Baptist Church Parking (#2)
 - 11 lots, estimated 127 parking spaces
- Southside Community Center (#3)
 - 102 parking spaces. City reviewing options for future of the center.
- Evans Plaza Park (#4)
 - \$1.225 million from City committed to design and construction
- National Juneteenth Museum (#5)
 - Up to \$15M approved by City (pending private funding commitment for the Museum)



PROPOSED SITE



PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

TYPE	IMPROVEMENT	PROPOSED RTC FUNDING
Roadway	Realignment of East Rosedale at Veal Street intersection	\$750,000 STBG ¹
Sustainable Development/ Parking/Land Use	Reconstruct and manage parking (publicly owned/leased), add brick pavers and streetscape enhancements, add lighting and improve security; project will enhance travel and tourism	\$1,250,000 RTR ²
Transit	Construct a context-sensitively designed transit portico/station at Rosedale and Veal Street, including real-time arrival/departure information	\$500,000 STBG ¹
Technology	Deploy broadband as a travel demand management program to reduce the need for single occupant vehicle travel	\$250,000 STBG ¹
Green Space	Management of public space to create/facilitate a walkable destination	\$250,000 RTR ²
	Total	\$3,000,000

¹ STBG = Surface Transportation Block Grant; To be matched with regional Transportation Development Credits

² RTR = Regional Toll Revenue; No match required

PROPOSED ACTION

- RTC approval of:
 - Proposed investments at the future Juneteenth Museum (contingent upon the museum coming to fruition)
 - Amending the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and updating any administrative and/or planning documents as needed to incorporate the project funding

CONTACT/QUESTIONS?

Christie J. Gotti
Senior Program Manager
Transportation Project Programming
cgotti@nctcog.org

Karla Windsor
Senior Program Manager
Sustainable Development
kwindsor@nctcog.org

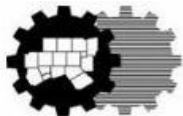
Shannon Stevenson
Senior Program Manager
Transit Management and Planning
sstevenson@nctcog.org

Connor Sadro
Transportation Planner
Transportation Technology and Innovation
csadro@nctcog.org

FIVE MILE CREEK TRAIL PARTNERSHIP WITH CITY OF DALLAS AND DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS BETWEEN MPO REVOLVER AND RTC LOCAL FUND

Regional Transportation Council

June 8, 2023



North Central Texas
Council of Governments
Transportation Department

BACKGROUND

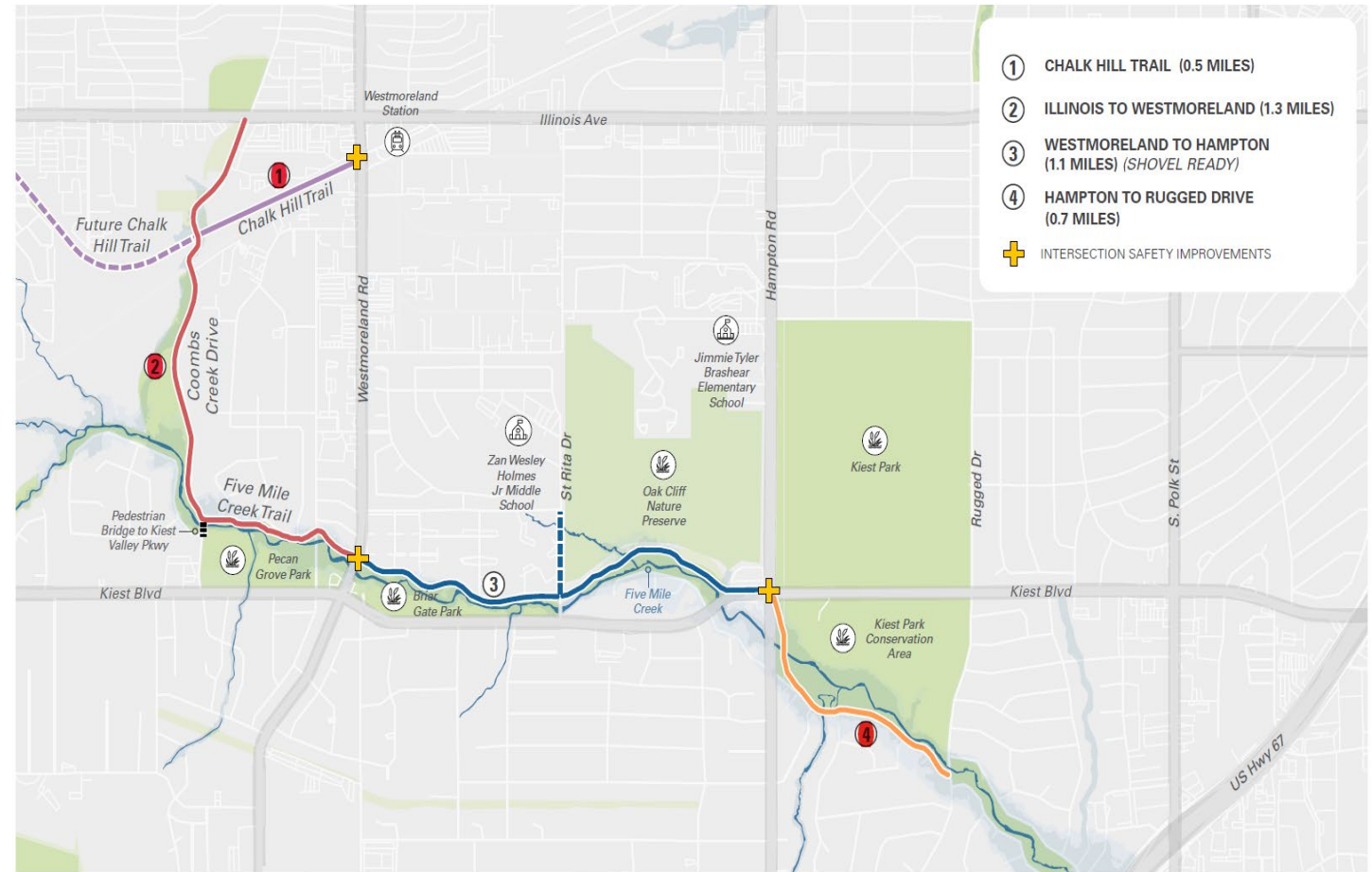
- The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG)/Regional Transportation Council (RTC) is required to pay for expenses associated with projects and programs it implements before federal reimbursement can be requested.
- With the recent award of numerous federal discretionary grants that NCTCOG will be administering (e.g., BUILD, RAISE), the amount of funding needed to cash flow projects has increased significantly.
- NCTCOG would also like to expand the pool of RTC Local funds available to implement projects outside of the restrictive federal process.
- The RTC does not have taxing authority to generate revenue to pay these invoices and fund these projects, so a source of local dollars is needed.
- The “MPO Revolver Fund” and RTC Local funds are typically used for these purposes, but those funds are already committed, leading to the need for more local dollars.

BACKGROUND (CONT'D)

- In July 2022, the RTC directed staff to pursue a funding partnership with Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) or the City of Dallas to expand the Revolver Fund to cash flow federal grant projects and replenish the RTC Local funding pool.
- Two federal/local partnerships with DART and the City of Dallas are being finalized to accomplish these goals:
 - Allocation of MPO Revolver and RTC Local funds from the partnership with DART (partnership approved December 2022)
 - Five Mile Creek Partnership with City of Dallas (pending)
- A third partnership with DART and the City of Dallas was approved in December 2022 to facilitate the construction of two parking garages.

FIVE MILE CREEK TRAIL PARTNERSHIP WITH CITY OF DALLAS

- The City of Dallas approached NCTCOG regarding funding for part of the Five Mile Creek Trail and expressed interest in helping create local funds for the “MPO Revolver.”
- The trail would provide critical connections to numerous parks, schools, transit facilities, and other trails throughout south Dallas.



Source: City of Dallas

PROPOSED PARTNERSHIP

- In return for \$15.4 million of federal funding¹ for the project, the City would send \$10 million of local funds to the RTC.
 - \$1 million for engineering
 - \$14.4 million for construction
- Funding would be matched with regional Transportation Development Credits
- Sections 1, 2, and 4 of the trail would be designed and constructed with this funding.
- Contingent upon final action by the City
- May involve a subsequent trade with DART, City of Dallas, and the RTC to access these local funds

¹ Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, Surface Transportation Block Grant, or Carbon Reduction Program

PROPOSED DISTRIBUTION BETWEEN MPO REVOLVER AND RTC LOCAL POOL

- Between this partnership and DART partnership approved in December 2022, a total of \$50 million of local funds would be available to the RTC for use for the Revolver fund and RTC Local pool.
- The following distribution between the two is proposed:
 - Add \$5 million to the Permanent Revolver fund for a total of \$15 million (that fund already has \$10 million)
 - Add a Temporary Revolver with \$10 million that would serve as a capital fund and “emergency relief valve” for the Permanent Revolver, if needed
 - Add the remaining \$35 million to the RTC Local account

APPROVAL TIMELINE

Meeting/Task	Date
STTC Action (DART Partnership)	December 2, 2022
RTC Action (DART Partnership)	December 8, 2022
Executive Board Action (DART Partnership)	January 26, 2023
Public Meeting	March 13, 2023
STTC Action (Five Mile Creek Partnership & Fund Distribution)	May 26, 2023
RTC Action (Five Mile Creek Partnership & Fund Distribution)	June 8, 2023
Executive Board Action (Five Mile Creek Partnership & Fund Distribution)	June 22, 2023
Anticipated Dallas City Council Action (Five Mile Creek)	June 28, 2023

PROPOSED ACTION

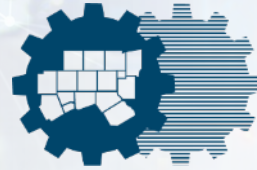
- RTC approval of:
 - Proposed Five Mile Creek Trail partnership
 - Proposed distribution of local funding into the MPO Revolver fund and RTC Local pool
 - Contingent upon approval by the City of Dallas
 - Amending the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and updating any administrative and/or planning documents as needed to incorporate the project funding

CONTACT/QUESTIONS?

Christie J. Gotti
Senior Program Manager
Ph: (817) 608-2338
cgotti@nctcog.org

Brian Dell
Principal Transportation Planner
Ph: (817) 704-5694
bdell@nctcog.org

Cody Derrick
Senior Transportation Planner
Ph: (817) 608-2391
cderrick@nctcog.org



North Central Texas Council of Governments

Work Zone Data Exchange Project

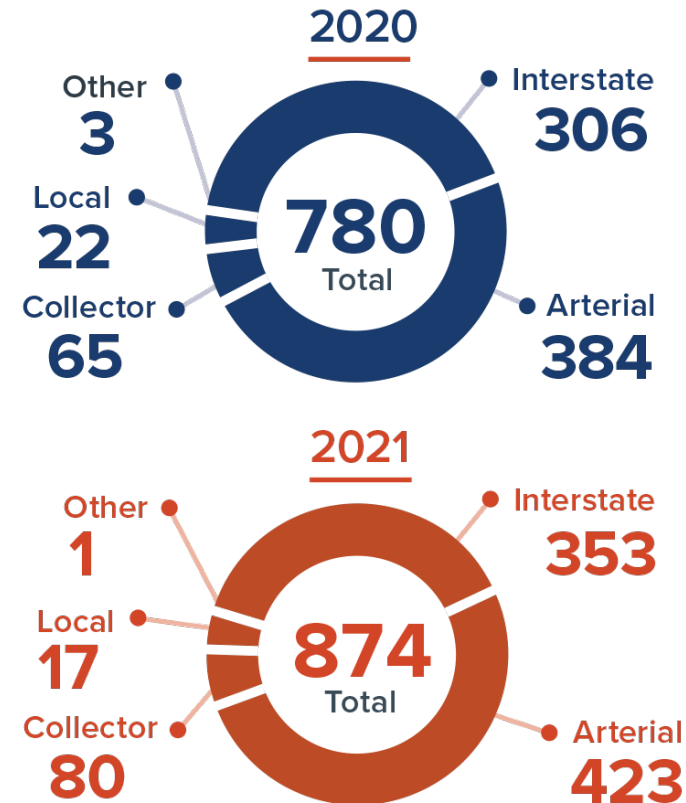
Thomas J. Bamonte
Technology & Innovation
Regional Transportation Council
6.8.23

Work Zones and Safety

In 2022, more than 25,000 traffic crashes occurred in work zones in Texas, resulting in 205 deaths—approximately one-fifth of US total--and another 788 serious injuries.

Source: [TxDOT](#)/FHWA

Based on NHTSA FARS data by type of roadway

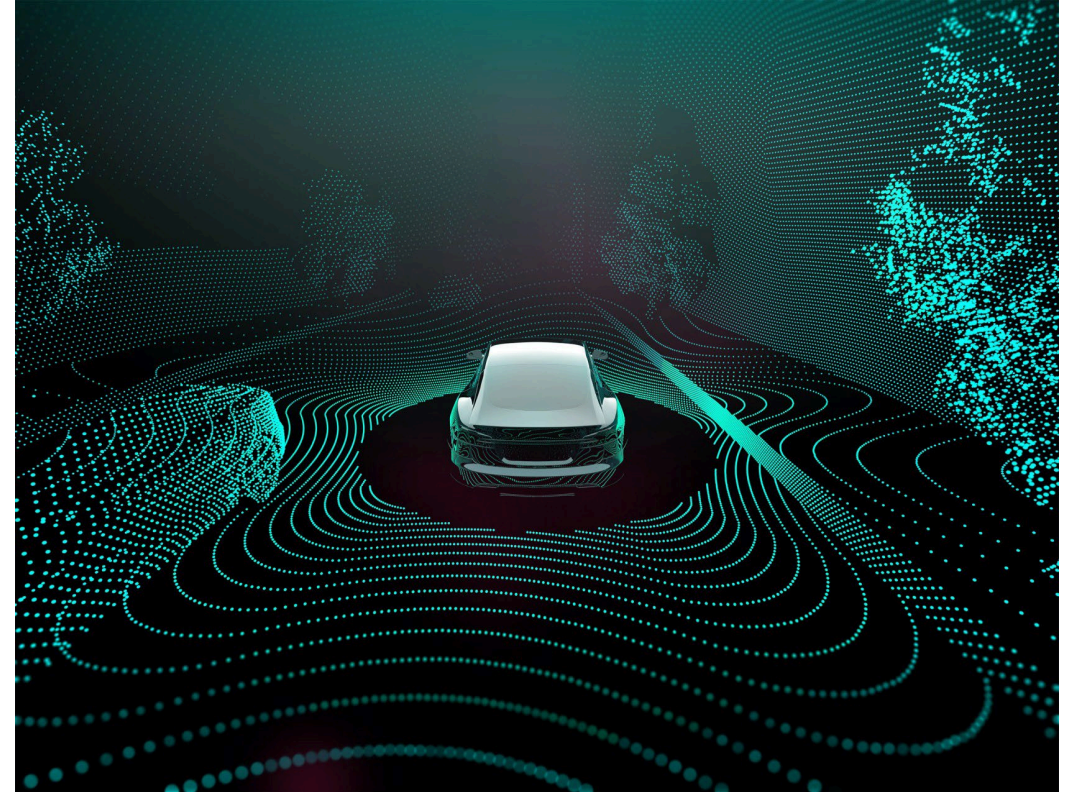


Source: FHWA

Work Zones and Vehicle Operations



Source: Ford



Source: Zenesact

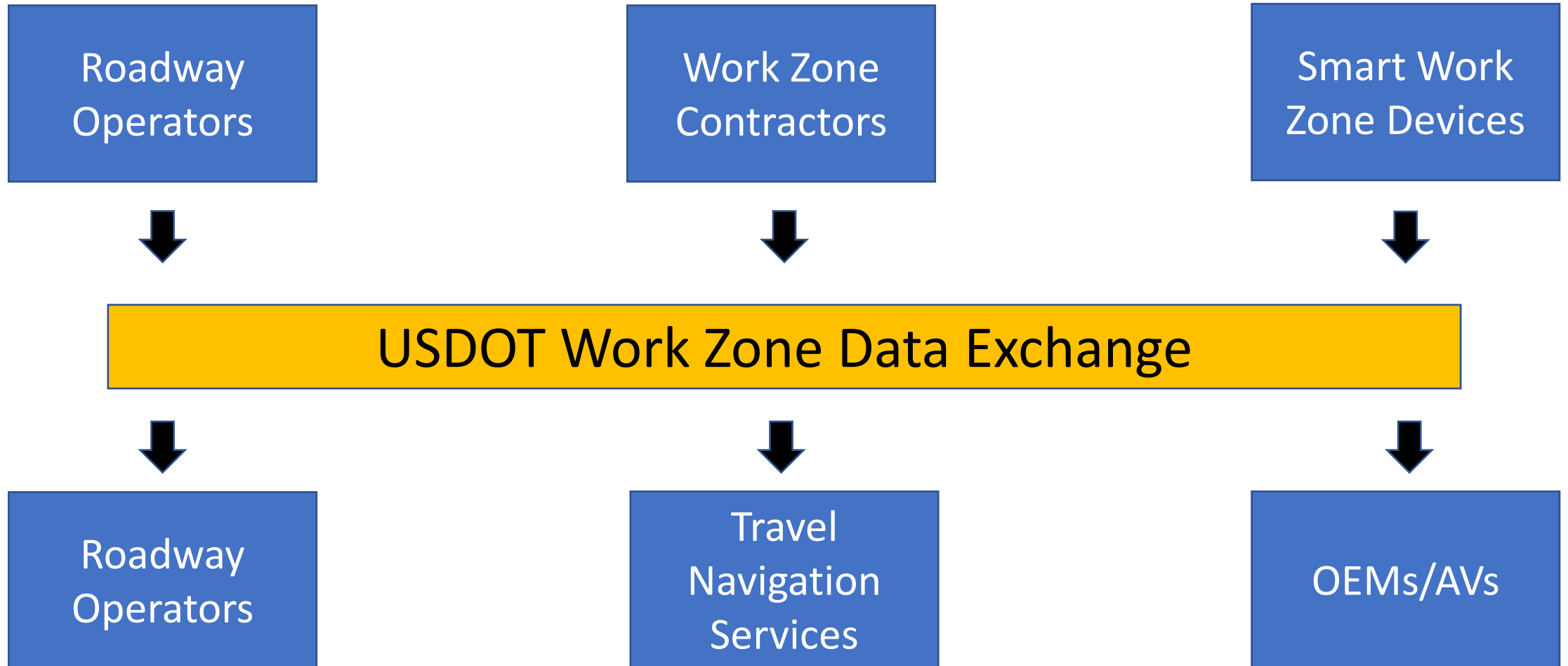
Work Zones and Roadway Operations

Identifying work zones
Monitoring work zones
Reporting work zones



Source:

Work Zone Data Exchange



NCTCOG's TXSHARE Cooperative Purchase of WZDx Services

Three categories of services

1. Convert raw work zone data into WZDx format
2. Establish WZDx-compliant reporting system
3. General WZDx services

Five vendors under contract:

- Blynco
- iCone
- Mixon Hill
- Navjoy
- One.Network



Project

1. Call for proposals and assistance from regional partners
2. Based on regional input, order WZDx services from NCTCOG's existing contracts
3. Implement WZDx services with local partners
 - Identify
 - Monitor
 - Report
4. Assign existing funding to meet needs

Requested Action

1. Approve Work Zone Data Exchange Project;
2. Direct staff to engage regional partners on Project scoping and execution;
3. Utilize existing funding and NCTCOG contracts to advance the Project; and
4. Authorize staff to take administrative steps necessary to implement the Project

Contact

Thomas Bamonte
Senior Program Manager
Transportation Technology & Innovation
North Central Texas Council of Governments
tbamonte@nctcog.org
469-600-0524
Twitter: [@TomBamonte](https://twitter.com/TomBamonte)



More Information



North Central Texas Council of Governments

Safe Streets and Roads for All Regional Planning Grant Application

Regional Transportation Council
6.8.2023

Karla Windsor

Safe Streets & Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program

- ❑ Created through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)
- ❑ Purpose: prevent deaths and serious injuries on our roadways
 - Focus on comprehensive safety action planning and implementing projects/strategies identified in safety action plans
- ❑ \$5 billion discretionary grant program
 - \$1 billion per year over five years
- ❑ Inclusive of all types of roadway safety interventions across the Safe Systems Approach
- ❑ One application per agency allowed



Safe Streets & Roads for All Grant Program

Funding Availability

\$577 Million**

– Planning/Demonstration
(National)

\$600 Million

– Implementation
(National)

< 15% per State

– Overall Program

Minimum Award*

\$100,000

– Planning/Demonstration

\$2.5 Million

– Implementation

Maximum Award*

\$10 Million

– Planning/Demonstration

\$25 Million

– Implementation

Cost Sharing

80% Federal | 20 % non-Federal

Applicant/Condition Eligibility

1. MPOs
2. Political Subdivision of a State
(City, Town, County, Transit Agency, Special District, etc.)
3. Tribal Government
4. Multi-Jurisdictional Group of Above Entities

* There is no minimum or maximum award amount; however, the NOFO provides expected minimum and maximum ranges for applicant consideration.

**Includes \$177 million rollover from FY22



NCTCOG Regional Safe Streets Planning/Demonstration Grant Project

Advancing Regional Multimodal Safety

Conduct additional planning in targeted corridors recommended by the *Regional Roadway Safety Plan* and the *Regional Pedestrian Safety Action Plan*:

- Road Safety Audits
- Safe Routes to Schools Planning

Gather in-depth data in targeted highest risk corridors

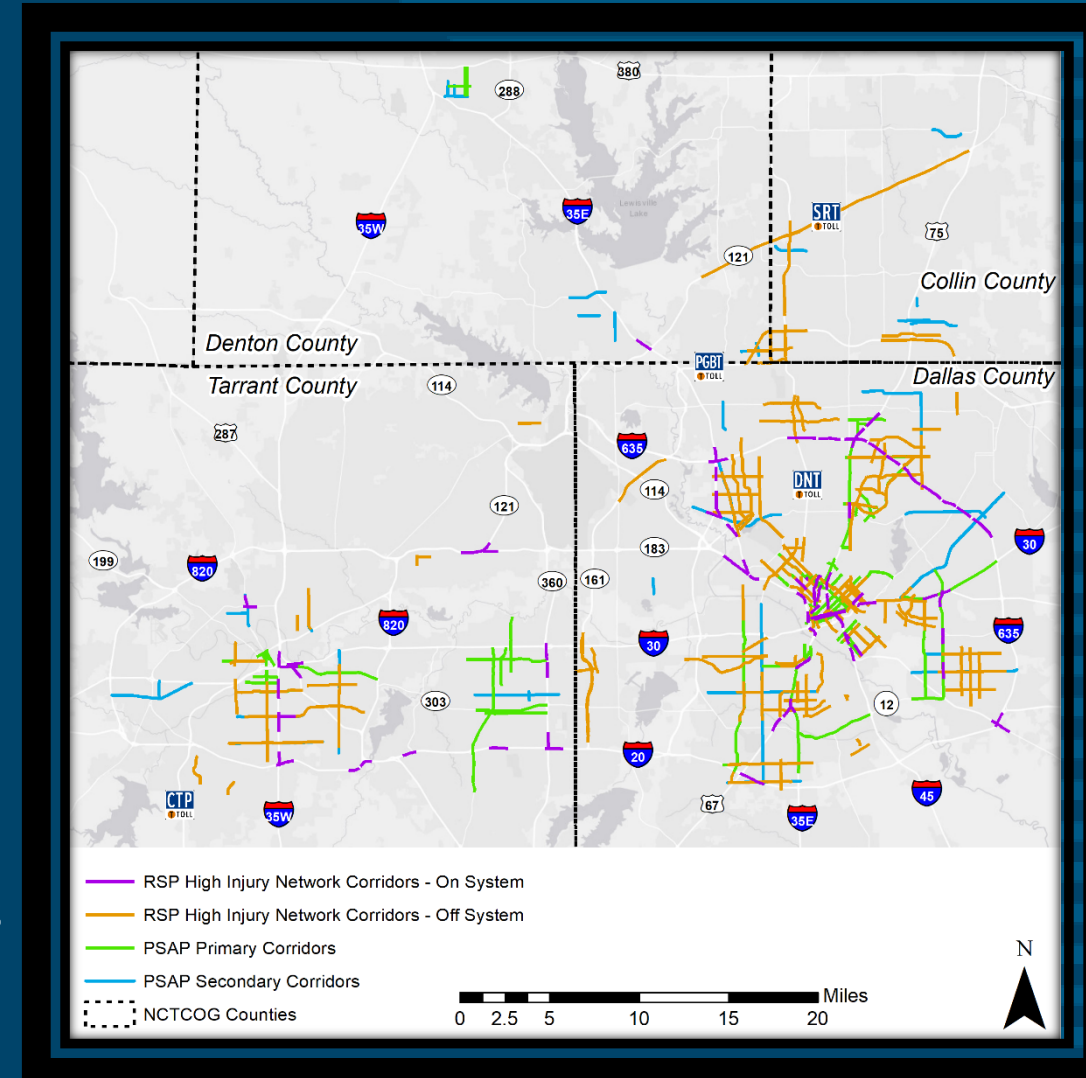
- Existing conditions to assist with cost estimates (e.g. lighting, ADA, utilities, land uses)
- Traffic / user counts

Demonstration Activities

- Education, Enforcement, Evaluation, Electronic Tools



Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant Application



NCTCOG Regional Safe Streets Planning/Demonstration Grant Application

Total Planning Budget	Federal (SS4A)	Non-Federal Match	Match Source
\$6,250,000	\$5,000,000	\$1,250,000	Regional Toll Revenue



City of Dallas Safe Streets Implementation Grant Project

Martin Luther King, Jr Blvd / Cedar Crest Blvd

Implement safety countermeasures to address the safety of all modes of transportation including motor vehicle, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian:

- Complete street (context-sensitive) retrofit
- DART Bus Stops / Smart Shelters upgrades
- Technology upgrades
- Submitted by NCTCOG as lead in 2022 for implementation; will be resubmitted by City of Dallas with NCTCOG/DART partnership.



City of Dallas Application Safe Streets Implementation Grant

Anticipated Budget

Component Name	Project Cost	Federal (SS4A)	Non-Federal Match	Match Source
Complete Street (Context Sensitive) Retrofit, Safety, and Technology Upgrades	\$26,250,000	\$21,000,000	\$5,250,000	City of Dallas
DART Bus Stop / Smart Bus Shelter Upgrades	\$1,000,000	\$800,000	\$200,000	DART
Total	\$27,250,000	\$21,800,000	\$5,450,000	



Schedule

Date	Milestone
March 30, 2023	NOFO Released
May 26, 2023	STTC Action
June 8, 2023	RTC Action
June 22, 2023	Executive Board Endorsement (NCTCOG Regional Safety Planning Grant Application)
July 10, 2023	Applications Due (will submit Friday – July 7 th)



Requested Action

Approval of NCTCOG planning/demonstration project grant application for the FY2023 Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Discretionary Grant program.

Approve the use of \$1.25M in Regional Toll Revenue funds for non-federal match should the project be selected for funding.

Approve staff administratively amending the TIP/STIP and other planning/administrative documents to incorporate these changes.

Endorsement of partnership for the City of Dallas application submittal of the MLK Jr Blvd/Cedar Crest Blvd Implementation grant.



CONTACT



Karla Windsor, AICP

Senior Program Manager

kwindor@nctcog.org | 817-608-2376

Kevin Kokes, AICP

Program Manager

kkokes@nctcog.org | 817-695-9275

Stu Burzette

Transportation Planner

sburzette@nctcog.org | 817-704-5686

Natalie Bettger

Senior Program Manager

nbettger@nctcog.org | 817-695-9280

Sonya Landrum

Program Manager

slandrum@nctcog.org | 817-695-9273

Kevin Kroll

Senior Transportation Planner

kroll@nctcog.org | 817-695-9258

Michael Misantonis

Transportation Planner

mmisantonis@nctcog.org | 817-608-2384





FEDERAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES: PM2 CONDITION TARGETS FOR NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM (NHS) PAVEMENT & BRIDGE ASSETS



JEFFREY C. NEAL – SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL (RTC)
INFORMATION ITEM – June 8, 2023

NCTCOG Federal Performance Target-Setting Activities

Context – Regional Strategy

■ **Implement required Federal measures**

- Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act / Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)
- National Performance – State of Good Repair
 - Ensure safety of traveling public
 - Ensure effective long-term operation of transportation infrastructure using asset management
- National Performance – National Highway System (NHS) Good/Poor Condition Tracking

■ **Support TxDOT targets as much as possible**

- State Performance

■ **Set goals to guide regional planning documents & project outcomes**

- Regional Performance – Tell Our Story
- Include in Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)
- Include in Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

NCTCOG Federal Performance Target-Setting Activities *(cont.)*

Recent/Upcoming Committee Actions – PM2 (Pavement/Bridge) Targets

Rulemaking	Number of Measures	RTC Target-Setting Action		Reporting	
		Recent/Upcoming	Next <i>(Anticipated)</i>	Period	Schedule
Transit Safety (PTASP)	7	May 2021 ✓	Early 2025	Annually	Annually
Transit Asset Management (TAM)	4	September 2022 ✓	Late 2026	Annually	Annually
PM3 – System Performance, Freight, & CMAQ	7	September 2022 ✓	Late 2024	Four-Year Performance Periods <i>(Second Period: 2023-26)</i>	Biennially <i>(beginning, middle, & end of performance periods)</i>
PM1 – Roadway Safety	5	February 2023 ✓	Early 2024 <i>(Information/Update)</i>	Annually	Annually
PM2 – Pavement/Bridge Condition	6	July 2023	Late 2024	Four-Year Performance Periods <i>(Second Period: 2023-26)</i>	Biennially <i>(beginning, middle, & end of performance periods)</i>

2022

First PM2 performance period (2018-21) ends

Second PM2 performance period (2022-25) begins

RTC adopts PM2 targets for 2024 & 2026

2024

Mid-performance period report due October 1, 2024

RTC adjusts or reaffirms 2026 PM2 targets

2026

Second PM2 performance period (2022-25) ends

Third PM2 performance period (2026-29) begins

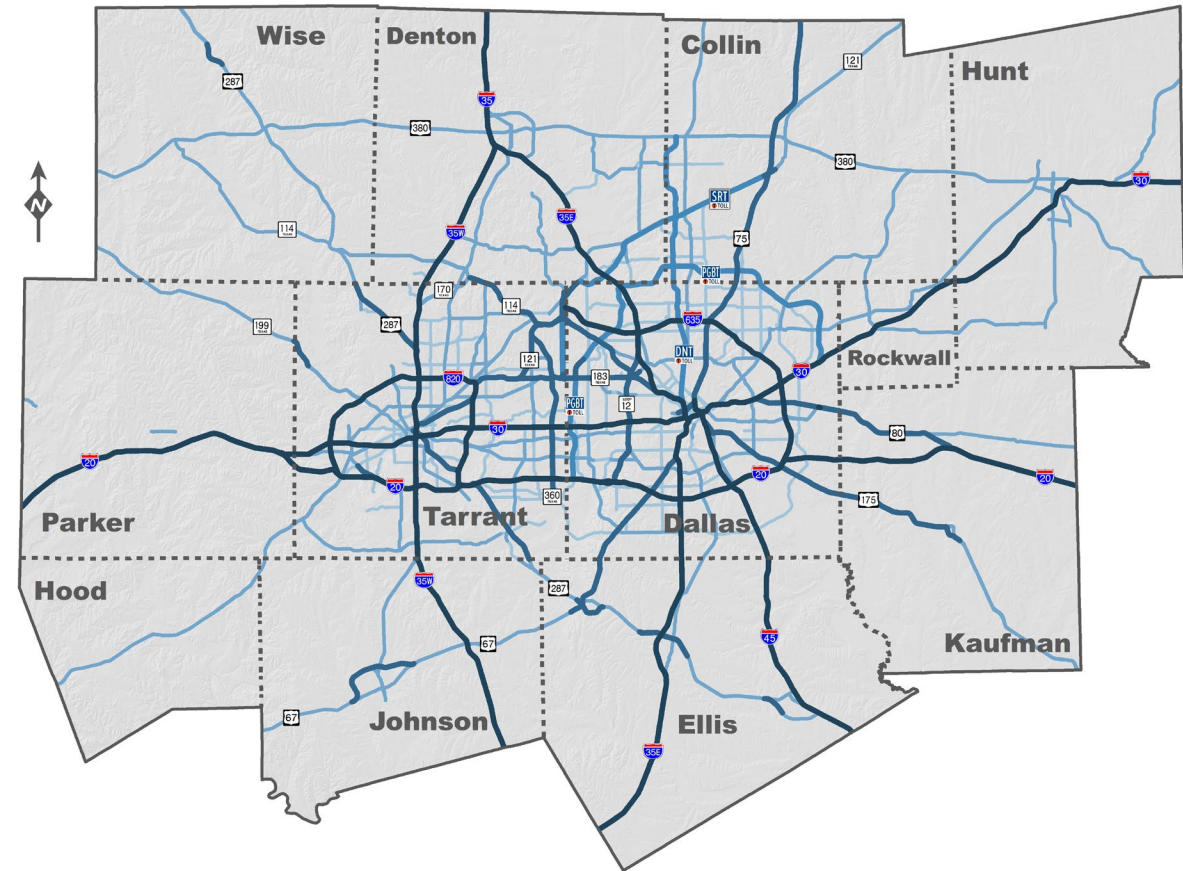
RTC adopts new PM2 targets for 2028 & 2030

National Highway System (NHS) – NCTCOG Region

Review of NHS Roadway Classifications for PM₂ Analysis

- State DOTs required to establish PM₂ targets representing the full NHS extent, *regardless of ownership*
- Total NHS (NCTCOG) = 12,448 lane-miles
 - ▣ Interstate Highways (IH) = 3,215 lane-miles (25.8%)
 - ▣ Non-IH Freeways = 1,667 lane-miles (13.4%)
 - ▣ On-System Arterials = 3,769 lane-miles (30.3%)
 - ▣ Off-System Toll Roads = 838 lane-miles (6.7%)
 - ▣ Off-System Arterials = 2,959 lane-miles (23.8%)
- NHS comprises 14% of region's total roadway lane-miles (2020), but carries 63% of total vehicle-miles of travel (VMT)

National Highway System (NHS) Facilities



NHS PM2 Pavement Analysis *(cont.)*

New Pavement Data Considerations (Non-Interstate NHS Facilities)

- Pavement roughness often judged as critical link between user satisfaction (comfort/safety) and performance
 - ▣ International Roughness Index (IRI) is standardized & practical via data sensed without traffic disruption
 - ▣ Roughness & structural distress (cracking, rutting, & faulting) interdependencies do exist, but sensing limitations prevent consensus on exact analytical relationship
- **Roughness (IRI) alone results in overestimation of poor condition pavements**
- **Non-Interstate NHS Pavements:**
 - ▣ **First PM2 Performance Period: IRI Only**
 - ▣ **Second PM2 Performance Period: IRI + Structural Distress**
- Revised methodology results in positive condition differences for non-Interstate pavements
- Integration of metrics will enable more holistic lifecycle assessments of pavement assets

NHS PM2 Pavement Analysis

Statewide Data/Targets – Good Condition (DRAFT)

NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM (NHS) ROADWAY CATEGORIES	DESIRED IMPROVEMENT TREND	First Performance Period (2018-22)			Second Performance Period (2022-26)		
		2018 Baseline	2020 Observed	2022 Target <i>(Updated 2020)</i>	2022 Baseline <i>(Last Observed)</i>	2024 Target <i>(Forecast)</i>	2026 Target <i>(Forecast)</i>
State of Texas							
Good Pavement Condition							
Interstate NHS	↗	66.8%	66.6%	66.5%	64.5%	63.9%	63.6%
Non-Interstate NHS	↗	54.4%	55.2%	54.1%	51.7%	45.5%	46.0%

NHS PM2 Pavement Analysis

Regional Data/Trends – Good Condition (DRAFT)

NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM (NHS) ROADWAY CATEGORIES	DESIRED IMPROVEMENT TREND	First Performance Period (2018-22)			Second Performance Period (2022-26)		
		2018 Baseline	2020 Observed	2022 Trend <i>(Updated 2020)</i>	2022 Baseline <i>(Last Observed)</i>	2024 Trend <i>(Forecast)</i>	2026 Trend <i>(Forecast)</i>
North Central Texas (NCTCOG) Region							
Good Pavement Condition							
Interstate NHS	➡	50.1%	34.9%	19.8%			
Non-Interstate NHS: <i>On-System Freeways (TxDOT)</i>	➡	43.2%	48.8%	54.4%			
Non-Interstate NHS: <i>On-System Arterials (TxDOT)</i>	➡	36.1%	43.3%	50.9%			
Non-Interstate NHS: <i>Off-System Arterials (Local)</i>	➡	1.2%	1.1%	1.0%			
Non-Interstate NHS: <i>Off-System Toll Roads (NTTA)</i>	➡	93.4%	91.4%	90.9%			

NHS PM2 Pavement Analysis *(cont.)*

Statewide Data/Targets – Poor Condition (DRAFT)

NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM (NHS) ROADWAY CATEGORIES	DESIRED IMPROVEMENT TREND	First Performance Period (2018-22)			Second Performance Period (2022-26)		
		2018 Baseline	2020 Observed	2022 Target <i>(Updated 2020)</i>	2022 Baseline <i>(Last Observed)</i>	2024 Target <i>(Forecast)</i>	2026 Target <i>(Forecast)</i>
State of Texas							
Poor Pavement Condition							
Interstate NHS	↗	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Non-Interstate NHS	↗	13.8%	14.2%	14.2%	1.3%	1.5%	1.5%

NHS PM2 Pavement Analysis *(cont.)*

Regional Data/Trends – Poor Condition (DRAFT)

NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM (NHS) ROADWAY CATEGORIES	DESIRED IMPROVEMENT TREND	First Performance Period (2018-22)			Second Performance Period (2022-26)		
		2018 Baseline	2020 Observed	2022 Trend <i>(Updated 2020)</i>	2022 Baseline <i>(Last Observed)</i>	2024 Trend <i>(Forecast)</i>	2026 Trend <i>(Forecast)</i>
North Central Texas (NCTCOG) Region							
Poor Pavement Condition							
Interstate NHS	➡	0.2%	0.7%	1.3%			
Non-Interstate NHS: <i>On-System Freeways (TxDOT)</i>	➡	6.4%	6.8%	7.2%			
Non-Interstate NHS: <i>On-System Arterials (TxDOT)</i>	➡	18.5%	20.4%	22.1%			
Non-Interstate NHS: <i>Off-System Arterials (Local)</i>	➡	73.7%	74.3%	74.1%			
Non-Interstate NHS: <i>Off-System Toll Roads (NTTA)</i>	➡	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%			

NHS PM2 Bridge Analysis

Statewide Data/Targets – Good/Poor Condition (DRAFT)

NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM (NHS) ROADWAY CATEGORIES	DESIRED IMPROVEMENT TREND	First Performance Period (2018-22)			Second Performance Period (2022-26)		
		2018 Baseline	2020 Observed	2022 Target <i>(Updated 2020)</i>	2022 Baseline <i>(Last Observed)</i>	2024 Target <i>(Forecast)</i>	2026 Target <i>(Forecast)</i>
State of Texas							
Good Bridge Condition							
All NHS Facilities	↗	50.7%	50.7%	50.4%	49.2%	48.5%	47.6%
Poor Bridge Condition							
All NHS Facilities	↘	0.9%	1.3%	1.5%	1.1%	1.5%	1.5%

NHS PM2 Bridge Analysis

Regional Data/Trends – Good/Poor Condition (DRAFT)

NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM (NHS) ROADWAY CATEGORIES	DESIRED IMPROVEMENT TREND	First Performance Period (2018-22)			Second Performance Period (2022-26)		
		2018 Baseline	2020 Observed	2022 Trend <i>(Updated 2020)</i>	2022 Baseline <i>(Last Observed)</i>	2024 Trend <i>(Forecast)</i>	2026 Trend <i>(Forecast)</i>
North Central Texas (NCTCOG) Region							
Good Bridge Condition							
All NHS Facilities	↗	55.3%	56.0%	57.9%			
Poor Bridge Condition							
All NHS Facilities	↘	1.9%	2.3%	2.0%			

NHS PM2 Bridge Analysis *(cont.)*

Extent/Status of Regional Poor Condition NHS Bridges

- In considering FY 22 Bridge Investment Program (BIP) candidates, staff coordinated with local governments and TxDOT's Bridge Division/local Districts to analyze poor condition NHS bridges
- INFRA Grant (2019) – North Central Texas Strategic NHS Bridge Program:
 - ▣ Original Submittal – \$229 million (\$113 million INFRA requested) for 12 projects
 - ▣ Awarded Project – \$45.5 million (\$8.8 million INFRA awarded) for seven projects (3 – East; 4 – West)
 - ▣ Implementation – \$28.5 million for four projects (1 – East; 3 – West)
 - All projects now under construction
 - All projects from original submittal have treatments underway or funding/scheduled, except for one (still on poor condition list)
- Poor Condition NHS Bridges (2022) – Breakdown by TxDOT District:
 - ▣ Dallas: 37 bridges (36 – “On-System”; 1 – Off-System”)
 - ▣ Fort Worth: 12 bridges (9 – “On-System”; 3 – “Off-System”)
- Of the 49 regional NHS bridges in poor condition, treatments for all but three structures are funded/scheduled for construction, under construction, or completed:
 - ▣ TxDOT (City of Dallas): Loop 12 NB bridge (to IH 35E NB) over IH 35E SB
 - ▣ TxDOT (City of Fort Worth): SH 121 WB/Belknap Street bridge over IH 35W SB
 - ▣ TxDOT (City of Fort Worth): SH 199 (Jacksboro Highway) bridge over West Fork Trinity River

PM2 Target Decision-Making

Proposed RTC Action – Affirm Support for New Statewide Targets (DRAFT)

Good

- **Affirm NCTCOG support** for new TxDOT statewide “Good Condition” NHS pavement and bridge targets for 2024 and 2026

Poor

- **Affirm NCTCOG support** for new TxDOT statewide “Poor Condition” NHS pavement and bridge targets for 2024 and 2026
- **Collaborate to plan/program projects** contributing toward accomplishment of pavement/bridge goals via the following actions:
 - ▣ NCTCOG will continue to work with local governments on annual monitoring and expediting improvements for identified NHS Off-System Arterials in “Poor Condition”
 - ▣ NCTCOG will continue to work with TxDOT/local governments on annual monitoring and expediting improvements for identified NHS Bridges in “Poor Condition”

PM2 Target Decision-Making

Schedule

February 10, 2023	TxDOT Submits New PM2 Targets to FHWA <i>(180-day MPO review begins)</i>
May 26, 2023	STTC Fast Fact
June 8, 2023	RTC Information
June 12, 2023	NCTCOG Transportation Public Meeting <i>(comment period ends July 11, 2023)</i>
June 23, 2023	STTC Action
July 13, 2023	RTC Action
August 9, 2023	Deadline for MPOs to Report Whether They Will <u>Either</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i). Agree to plan/program projects contributing to affirmed TxDOT PM2 targets; or,(ii.) Commit to new quantifiable PM2 targets for the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA)

CONTACT INFORMATION

NCTCOG – Transportation

Christie Gotti

Senior Program Manager
(817) 608-2338
cgotti@nctcog.org

Chris Klaus

Senior Program Manager
(817) 695-9286
cklaus@nctcog.org

Jody Loza

Program Manager
(817) 704-5609
jloza@nctcog.org

James McLane

Senior Information Analyst
(817) 704-5636
jmlane@nctcog.org

Jenny Narvaez

Program Manager
(817) 608-2342
jnarvaez@nctcog.org

Jeffrey C. Neal

Senior Program Manager
(817) 608-2345
jneal@nctcog.org

Patricia Rohmer

Project Engineer
(817) 608-2307
prohmer@nctcog.org

John Starnes

Senior Information Analyst
(817) 704-5607
jstarnes@nctcog.org

TxDOT

Bernie Carrasco

Director – Bridge Management
(512) 416-2255
bernie.carrasco@txdot.gov

Jenny Li

Director – Pavement Asset Management
(512) 416-3288
jenny.li@txdot.gov

Casey Wells

Director – TP&P System Planning
(512) 423-8986
casey.wells@txdot.gov



Air Quality Ozone: Federal vs. State

Regional Transportation Council

June 8, 2023

Jenny Narvaez



Emissions Monitoring

Criteria Air Pollutants:

	<u>Attainment</u>	<u>Nonattainment</u>
Ozone		
Particulate Matter		
Lead		
Nitrogen Dioxide		
Carbon Monoxide		
Sulfur Dioxide		

Monitoring and Increased Regulations

Greenhouse Gas Emissions (i.e. , Carbon Dioxide)



National Air Quality Standard Review/Compliance Process

Federal Clean Air Act:
EPA required to review
the National Ambient Air
Quality Standards
(NAAQS) every five years
which may or may not
result in revision

**EPA Reviews and Revises
NAAQS**

State Designation Recommendations

**EPA Nonattainment Designation
and Classifications**

**Emissions Inventory
State Implementation Plan (SIP)
Revisions**



**EPA
Reclassification**

**Area Fails to
Attain Standard**

**Area Attains
Standard**

**Redesignation Request and
Maintenance Plan SIP Revision**

Redesignation to Attainment

 **Environmental Protection
Agency (EPA) Action**
 **Texas Commission on
Environmental Quality
(TCEQ) Action**



Federal: National Air Quality Standard Review

Federal Clean Air Act:
EPA required to
review the NAAQS
every five years
which may or may not
result in revision



**EPA Reviews
NAAQS**



Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC)

- Independent scientific review committee
- Composed of seven members including:
 - Member of National Academy of Sciences
 - Physician
 - State Air Pollution Control Agency Representative
- Review assessments and make recommendation to EPA Administrator



Federal: National Air Quality Standard Review Process Overview



Federal: EPA Revises NAAQS: Assessments

Integrated Science Assessment (ISA)

Prepared by EPA's Center for Public Health and Environmental Assessment (CPHEA)

Identifies, critically evaluates and synthesizes the most policy-relevant current scientific literature (epidemiology, controlled human exposure, animal toxicology, atmospheric science, exposure science, environmental science, and ecology)

Provides focused assessment of the scientific evidence to address specific scientific questions and inform the overall policy-relevant questions

Scientific foundation for each national standard review

Risk/Exposure Assessment (REA)

Develops quantitative characterizations of exposures and associated risks to human health or the environment associated with recent air quality conditions and with air quality based on conclusion from ISA

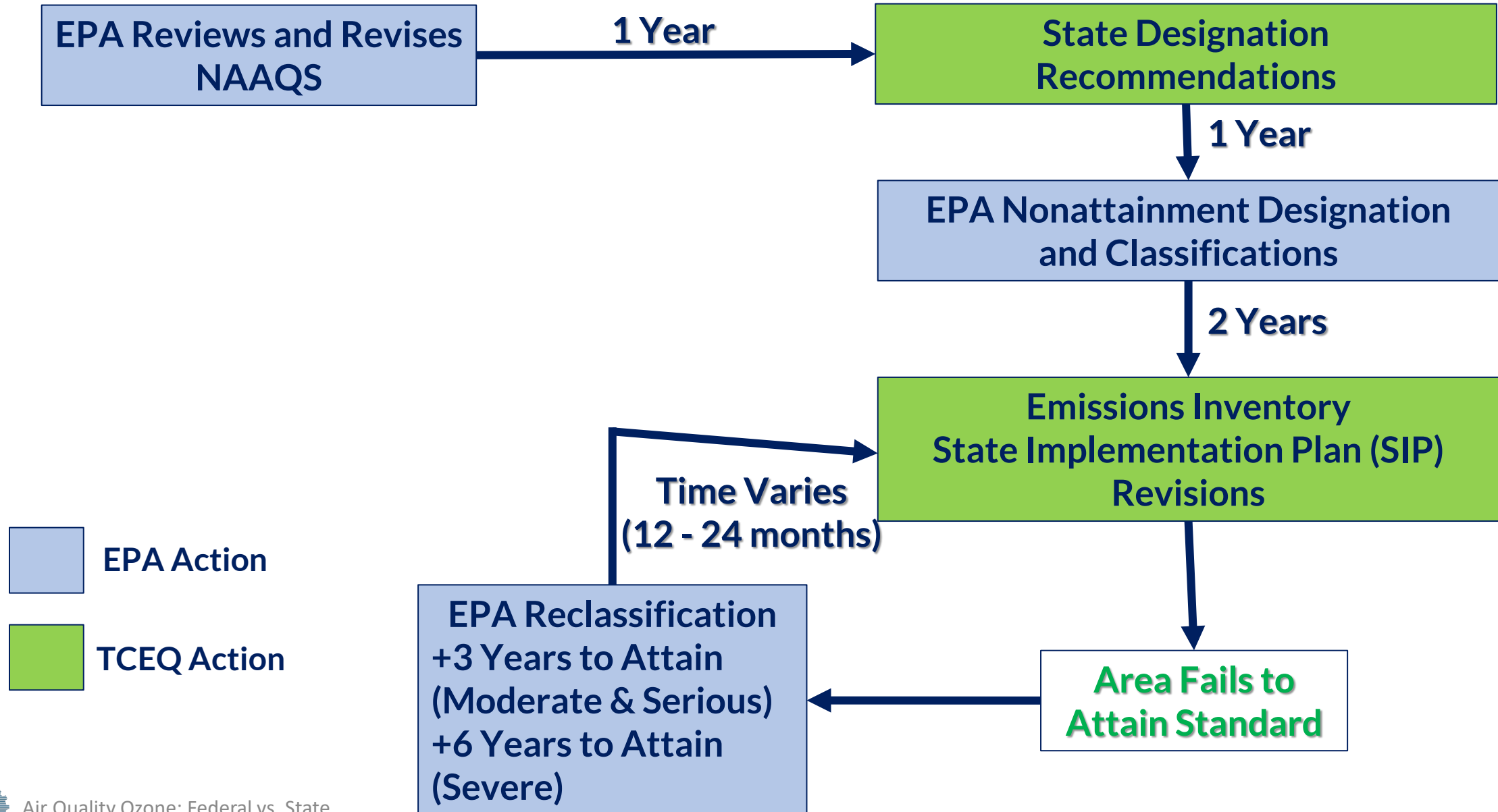
Policy Assessment (PA)

Provides an evaluation of the currently available information with regard to the adequacy of the current standards and potential alternatives

Integrates and interprets the current scientific evidence from the ISA and REA to frame policy options for consideration by the Administrator



National Air Quality Standard Review/Compliance Process



State: State Implementation Plans

State Implementation Plan (SIP) Revisions – shows how a nonattainment area will improve air quality and meet the NAAQS by the attainment deadline

- Reasonable Further Progress

- Attainment Demonstration

 - Air Emissions Monitoring Data

 - Emissions Inventory

 - Photochemical Modeling

 - Control Strategy

Failure to submit or implement a SIP or submission of a SIP that is unacceptable to the EPA can result it:

- Start of a Federal Implementation Plan (FIP) clock

- SIP call

- EPA sanctions clock

 - Sanctions can include cutting off federal highway funds and setting more stringent pollution offsets for certain emitters



Ongoing Local Efforts

Continued partnership efforts with state and federal agencies

Meeting on Potential Source Emissions Fee – February 17, 2023

Letter from RTC to TCEQ – April 12, 2023

Development of on-road emissions inventories for SIP

Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) Reasonable Further Progress

DFW Attainment Demonstration

Coordination of SIP Appendix H: Local Air Quality Initiatives

Locally implemented strategies

Implementation of on-road measures committed in the SIP

Transportation Control Measures

Communication of regional opportunities to local governments

Example: EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Meeting – March 30, 2023

Grant Availability (www.nctcog.org/aqfunding)



References

CHRIS KLAUS
Senior Program Manager
cklaus@nctcog.org
817-695-9286

JENNY NARVAEZ
Program Manager
jnarvaez@nctcog.org
817-608-2342

VIVEK THIMMAVAJJHALA
Transportation System Modeler II
vthimmavajjhala@nctcog.org
817-704-2504

NICHOLAS VAN HAASEN
Air Quality Planner III
nvanhaasen@nctcog.org
817-608-2335

<https://www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/air/ozone>



Regional Transportation Council Attendance Roster
June 2022 - May 2023

RTC MEMBER	Entity	6/9/22	7/14/22	8/18/22	9/8/22	10/13/22	11/10/22	12/08/22	1/12/23	2/9/2023	3/9/2023	4/13/2023	5/11/2023
Daniel Alemán Jr (01/22)	Mesquite	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	E(R)	P	E(R)	P
Steve Babick (06/22)	Carrollton	P	E	E	A	A	P	P	P	P	E	P	P
Dennis Bailey (02/21)	Rockwall County	E(R)	E(R)	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P
Rick Bailey (07/22)	Johnson County	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Adam Bazaldua (09/21)	Dallas	P	P	P	E(R)	A	E(R)	P	P	P	E	P	P
Elizabeth M. Beck (08/21)	Fort Worth	P	A	E(R)	P	A	P	P	A	P	P	A	P
Gyna Bivens (08/21)	Fort Worth	P	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P	P
Alan Blaylock (03/23)	Fort Worth	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	P	P	P
J. D. Clark (07/22)	Wise County	E(R)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	E(R)
Ceason Clemens (10/22)	TxDOT, Dallas	-	-	-	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Dianne Costa (10/19)	DCTA	P	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)	A(R)	P	P	E(R)	P
Michael Crain (06/22)	Fort Worth	E(R)	A	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P	A
Theresa Daniel (11/18)	Dallas County	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Jeff Davis (11/19)	Trinity Metro	P	P	E(R)	P	A(R)	P	P	P	P	P	A	E
Janet DePuy (09/21)	Richardson	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P	P	P
Andy Eads (1/09)	Denton County	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	E
Michael Evans (2/23)	Mansfield	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	A	P
Gary Fickes (12/10)	Tarrant County	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P
George Fuller (07/17)	McKinney	P	P	P	E	A	P	P	P	E	P	E	P
Raul H. Gonzalez (09/21)	Arlington	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P
Barry L. Gordon (12/20)	Duncanville	A	P	P	E	P	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P	P
Rick Grady (09/18)	Plano	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Lane Grayson (01/19)	Ellis County	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Mojy Haddad (10/14)	NTTA	P	P	P	E(R)	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P
Clay Lewis Jenkins (04/11)	Dallas County	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	E	E(R)
Ron Jensen (06/13)	Grand Prairie	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P	E(R)	P	P
Brandon Jones (05/21)	Lewisville	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P
John Keating (12/19)	Frisco	A	A(R)	A	P	P	A	E	E(R)	A	A	P	A
Brad LaMorgese (07/22)	Irving	--	P	P	P	E	E	E	P	E(R)	E	P	P
B. Adam McGough (07/20)	Dallas	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E
Cara Mendelsohn (07/20)	Dallas	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Ed Moore (07/22)	Garland	--	P	P	A	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	E
Raj Narayanan (03/23)	DFW Airport	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	P
Omar Narvaez (09/21)	Dallas	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	E	P	E	E(R)
Ramirez, Manny (1/23)	Tarrant County	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	A	P	P	P
Jim R. Ross (07/21)	Arlington	E(R)	E(R)	P	P	P	A	P	P	E(R)	E(R)	P	P

P= Present

A= Absent

R=Represented by Alternate

--= Not yet appointed

E= Excused Absence (personal illness, family emergency,
jury duty, business necessity, or fulfillment
of obligation arising out of elected service)

Regional Transportation Council Attendance Roster
June 2022 - May 2023

RTC MEMBER	Entity	6/9/22	7/14/22	8/18/22	9/8/22	10/13/22	11/10/22	12/08/22	1/12/23	2/9/2023	3/9/2023	4/13/2023	5/11/2023
David Salazar (10/22)	TxDOT, FW	-	-	-	-	P	E(R)	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P
Chris Schulmeister (07/20)	Allen	P	P	P	A(R)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)
Jeremy Tompkins (10/19)	Eules	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
T. Oscar Trevino Jr. (6/02)	Nrth Rch Hills	P	A(R)	P	P	P	P	P	A(R)	P	P	P	P
William Tsao (3/17)	Dallas	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Watts, Chris (12/22)	Denton	--	--	--	--	--	--	E	P	P	E	E	P
Duncan Webb (6/11)	Collin County	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Chad West (11/22)	Dallas	-	-	-	-	-	P	P	A	P	P	A	A
Michele Wong Krause	DART	E(R)	E(R)	P	P	P	E	P	E(R)	P	P	P	E

Note: Date in parenthesis indicates when member was
1st eligible to attend RTC meetings

P= Present
A= Absent
R=Represented by Alternate
--= Not yet appointed

E= Excused Absence (personal illness, family emergency,
jury duty, business necessity, or fulfillment
of obligation arising out of elected service)

Surface Transportation Technical Committee Attendance Roster

May 2022 - May 2023

STTC MEMBERS	Entity	5/27/22	6/24/22	7/22/22	8/26/22	09/23/22	10/28/22	12/02/22	1/27/2023	2/24/2023	3/24/2023	4/28/2023	5/26/2023
Joe Atwood	Hood County	*	*	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	P
Melissa Baker	Irving	*	*	A	P	P	A	P	P	P	E	P	R
Micah Baker	Dallas County	*	*	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Bryan Beck	Grapevine	*	*	A	P	E	A	A	A	P	E	P	A
David Boski	Mansfield	*	*	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	P	A
Shon Brooks	Waxahachie	*	*	P	P	P	P	A	P	A	P	P	A
Tanya Brooks	DART	*	*	A	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	P	R
Daniel Burnham	Arlington	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	R
Ceason Clemens	TxDOT Dallas	*	*	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Layne Cline	Coppell	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	A	A
Robert Cohen	Southlake	*	*	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
John Cordary, Jr.	TxDOT FW	*	*	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	E	E
Jackie Culton	Duncanville	--	--	P	A	A	P	A	P	R	P	P	P
Clarence Daugherty	Collin County	*	*	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Chad Davis	Wise County	*	*	P	A	A	P	P	P	P	P	A	A
Arturo Del Castillo	Dallas	*	*	A	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	E	E
Pritam Deshmukh	Richardson	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	R
Caryl DeVries	Grand Prairie	*	*	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	A	A
Greg Dickens	Hurst	*	*	P	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A
Rebecca Diviney	Denton	*	*	P	P	P	P	E	P	A	P	P	P
Phil Dupler	FWTA	*	*	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Chad Edwards	Trinity Metro	*	*	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P
Claud Elsom	Rockwall County	*	*	A	A	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P
Eric Fladager	Fort Worth	*	*	P	A	P	P	A	P	P	A	P	P
Chris Flanigan	Allen	*	*	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P
Ann Foss	Arlington	*	*	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P
Eric Galt	Mesquite	--	*	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P
Ricardo Gonzalez	TxDOT FW	*	*	E	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P
Gary Graham	McKinney	*	*	P	P	P	P	A	P	A	P	P	A
Tom Hammons	Carrollton	*	*	A	A	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P
Ron Hartline	The Colony	*	*	A	A	P	A	A	A	P	A	A	A
Barry Heard	Kaufman County	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	P	P
Shannon Hicks	Addison	*	*	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	P	A	R
Matthew Hotelling	Flower Mound	*	*	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	R
John Hudspeth	TxDOT Dallas	*	*	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Jeremy Hutt	Cleburne	*	*	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P
Thuan Huynh	McKinney	*	*	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Joseph Jackson	Tarrant County	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	P	P	P
Joel James	NTTA	*	*	A	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P
William Janney	Frisco	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	R

P=Present A=Absent R=Represented E=Excused (personal illness, family emergency, jury duty, business necessity)

-- =Not yet eligible to attend *Meeting held by video/audio conference. Individual attendance not taken.

Surface Transportation Technical Committee Attendance Roster

May 2022 - May 2023

STTC MEMBERS	Entity	5/27/22	6/24/22	7/22/22	8/26/22	09/23/22	10/28/22	12/02/22	1/27/2023	2/24/2023	3/24/2023	4/28/2023	5/26/2023
Kelly Johnson	NTTA	*	*	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A
Major L. Jones	Eules	--	--	--	--	--	A	P	A	P	P	P	P
Gus Khankarli	Dallas	*	*	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Alonzo Liñán	Keller	*	*	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Eron Linn	DART	*	*	A	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	E	A
Clay Lipscomb	Plano	*	*	P	P	A	P	A	P	P	A	P	P
Paul Luedtke	Garland	*	*	A	A	A	P	E	P	P	P	P	P
Stanford Lynch	Hunt County	*	*	P	P	A	P	E	P	A	A	A	A
Chad Marbut	Weatherford	*	*	A	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P
Alberto Mares	Ellis County	*	*	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P
Wes McClure	Mesquite	*	*	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A
Brian Moen	Frisco	*	*	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P
Mark Nelson	Richardson	*	*	P	A	P	E	P	P	P	P	E	E
Jim O'Connor	Irving	*	*	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P
Cintia Ortiz	Parker County	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	A	A	A	A	A
Eric Oscarson	Burleson	--	--	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Kevin Overton	Dallas	*	*	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	A
Tim Palermo	DCTA	*	*	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Dipak Patel	Lancaster	*	*	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	P	A	A
Martin Phillips	Fort Worth	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	A	P	P	P	P
John Polster	Denton County	*	*	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	P	P
Kelly Porter	Fort Worth	*	*	P	P	P	E	P	P	E	P	P	P
Tim Porter	Wylie	*	*	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P
Lauren Prieur	Fort Worth	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	A	E	P	P	A
Greg Royster	DFW Int. Airport	*	*	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	A
Kathryn Rush	Dallas	*	*	A	A	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	A
David Salmon	Lewisville	*	*	A	P	A	P	P	P	A	P	P	A
Ryan Sartor	Farmers Branch	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	A	P	P	A
Brian Shewski	Plano	*	*	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Walter Shumac, III	Grand Prairie	*	*	P	P	E	P	P	P	E	P	P	P
Randy Skinner	Tarrant County	*	*	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Cheryl Taylor	Bedford	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	A	P	P
Caleb Thornhill	Plano	*	*	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	P	P
Press Tompkins	Greenville	*	*	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Jennifer VanderLaan	Johnson County	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	A	P	P
Gregory Van	Haltom City	*	*	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P
Daniel Vedral	Irving	*	*	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	E	P
Caroline Waggoner	North Richland	*	*	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	P	P
Jana Wentzel	Arlington	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	P
Robert Woodbury	Cedar Hill	*	*	P	A	P	P	A	P	P	P	A	P
Larry Wright	Colleyville	*	*				A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Jamie Zech	TCEQ	*	*	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A

P=Present A=Absent R=Represented E=Excused (personal illness, family emergency, jury duty, business necessity)

-- =Not yet eligible to attend *Meeting held by video/audio conference. Individual attendance not taken.

MINUTES

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

April 28, 2023

The Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) met on Friday, April 28, 2023, at 1:30 pm, in the Transportation Council Room of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). The following STTC members or representatives were present: Melissa Baker, Bryan Beck, David Boski, Shon Brooks, Tanya Brooks, Daniel Burnham, Ceason Clemens, Jackie Culton, Clarence Daugherty, Pritam Deshmukh, Rebecca Diviney, Phil Dupler, Chad Edwards, Claud Elsom, Eric Fladager, Chris Flanigan, Eric Gallt, Ricardo Gonzalez, Gary Graham, Tom Hammons, Barry Heard, Daniel Herrig (representing Mark Nelson), Matthew Hotelling, John D. Hudspeth, Jeremy Hutt, Thuan Huynh, Joseph Jackson, Joel James, William Janney, Kelly Johnson, Major L. Jones, Gus Khankarli, Clay Lipscomb, Paul Luedtke, Chad Marbut, Alberto Mares, Wes McClure, Brian Moen, Jim O' Connor, Tim Palermo, Martin Phillips, John Polster, Kelly Porter, Tim Porter, Lauren Prieur, Don Raines (representing Arturo Del Castillo), Greg Royster, David Salmon, Ryan Sartor, Brian Shewski, Walter Shumac III, Randy Skinner, Cheryl Taylor, Caleb Thornhill, Jennifer VanderLaan, Gregory Van Nieuwenhuize, Cody Owen (representing Daniel Vedral), Caroline Waggoner, and Jana Wentzel.

Others present at the meeting were: Vickie Alexander, Berrien Barks, Martin Bate, Taylor Benjamin, Natalie Bettger, Joslyn Billings, Lance Bokinskie, Jesse Brown, Jackie Castillo, Shawn Conrad, Cody Derrick, Kevin Feldt, Camille Fountain, Rebekah Gongora, Duane Hangst, Amy Hodges, Ken Kirkpatrick, Travis Liska, Tom McLain, Michael Morris, Vickie Morris, Jenny Narvaez, Jeff Neal, Andrew Pagano, Donald Parker, Trey Pope, Ezra Pratt, Vercie Pruitt-Jenkins, Connor Sadro, Robert Saylor, Aliyah Shaikh, Samuel Simmons, Toni Stehling, Juliana VanderBorn, Nicholas VanHaasen, Amanda Wilson, and Jared Wright.

1. **Approval of March 24, 2023, Minutes:** The minutes of the March 24, 2023, meeting were approved with Gus Khankarli's clarification on his statement in Agenda Item 11, he clarified his statement should be corrected to state that a third party cannot impose "a good standing" provision on funds associated with this funding trade, in Electronic Item 1. Kelly Porter (M); Jim O' Connor (S). The motion passed unanimously.
2. **Consent Agenda:** There were no items on the Consent Agenda.
3. **Project Status Report: Milestone Policy Round 2 and FY2023 Project Tracking:** Cody Derrick requested a recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of various updates to Milestone Policy project deadlines and approval of a revised Milestone Policy and Project Tracking reporting frequency. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Milestone Policy focuses on projects funded for ten plus years that have not gone to construction and creates agency accountability to implement projects. FY2023 Project Tracking focuses on projects slated for implementation in FY2023, highlights potential problems in order to prevent delays, provides earlier monitoring, and enables the RTC to take corrective actions to avoid accumulation of carryover balances. A summary of projects that have not gone to construction as of April 2023 includes ten projects scheduled letting for FY2023 with a funding amount of \$95,451,136 and three projects scheduled letting for FY2024 and beyond with a funding amount of \$201,816,145, for a total of 13 projects and a total of \$297,267,281. Cody noted to date, seven projects have let by their established deadlines and three have been removed from the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) at the request of the implementing agency. Quarterly updates have been provided to

the Committee and RTC regarding the status of MPO Milestone Policy projects, along with separate updates on the progress of project phases in the current fiscal year. The process has led to an increase in communication between project sponsors, North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), and Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), but there are few substantive updates to report, due to the reporting frequency and the time a project takes to be implemented. Therefore, staff proposed to adjust the reporting frequency for the Milestone Policy and Project Tracking initiatives from four times a year to at least two times a year. The items will also continue to be combined into one. The summary of TIP FY2023 project funding - programmed funding is comprised of what is included in the TIP as well as transactions that have not formally been made in the TIP (e.g., early obligations or delaying projects to future years), obligations based on the federal fiscal year, which runs from October to September, and obligation amounts of \$578,507 for Congestion Management and Air Quality (CMAQ), \$23,661,006 for Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), and (\$1,994,510) for Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TASA), as of April 14, 2023. Milestone Policy status updates, along with the latest risk ratings, were included in Electronic Item 3.1. FY2023 Project Tracking status updates were provided in Electronic Item 3.2. Details on the status reports were provided in Electronic Item 3.3.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval to 1) extend the project deadline to the end of FY2025 for the US81/287 Corridor project and maintain funding on the project; 2) extend the project deadline for the various segments on Corporate Drive to match the new let dates and maintain funding on the projects (TIP 20131 and 20152 are anticipated to let in November 2023 and TIP 20108 and 20111 are anticipated to let in April 2024). These projects will be monitored to ensure that they proceed to construction; 3) adjust the reporting frequency for Milestone Policy and Project Tracking Updates from four times a year to at least two times a year; and 4) administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and other administrative/planning documents as needed. John Polster (M); Kelly Porter (S). The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Application to the Federal Highway Administration Charging and Fueling**

Infrastructure Program: Jared Wright requested a recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval to pursue funding from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program (CFI) under the Community Program and Alternative Corridor Program grant categories. For FY2022 and FY2023, \$700 million will be split evenly in two funding categories: Community Program (\$350 million available) with minimum of \$500,000 and maximum of \$15,000,000. Corridor Program (\$350 million available) with a minimum of \$1,000,000 and no maximum. The federal share is up to 80 percent of the total project cost. Eligible entities that contract with a private entity must include that the private entity will be responsible for the non-federal share of the project cost. Applications must be submitted by May 30, 2023, via <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/cfi/>. The Corridor Program was designed to build Electric Vehicles (EV) charging or alternative fueling infrastructure along designated Alternative Fuel Corridors (AFC). The program provides an opportunity to start deploying recommendations from the Interstate Highway (IH)45 Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Plan including battery electric vehicles for local freight and hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles for long haul freight. The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Call for Partners opened on March 6, 2023, to establish public-private partnerships between NCTCOG and project teams to scope Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) infrastructure projects and submit an application to the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Corridor Program and other federal and state funding opportunities. NCTCOG received twelve proposals by

the deadline of April 7, 2023. Corridor Program recommendations are to coordinate with proposal teams to refine project scopes for a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) proposal: hydrogen refueling near Alliance Texas Mobility Innovation Zone, Southern Dallas County Inland Port, and around Texas Triangle for up to seven hydrogen refueling stations at \$11 million in federal funding estimated per station, and a local freight electric truck depot in Denton with \$5 million in federal funding estimated. Eligibility for the Community Programs includes projects designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to expand or fill gaps in access to infrastructure. Because of extensive local government interest in building additional infrastructure, NCTCOG recommendation and approach for the Community Program is to apply on behalf of the region for funding to build up to 100 electric vehicle charging stations regionwide with at least 50 percent in Justice40 areas, emphasizing focus areas, creating specialized technical teams to streamline project implementation, and to pursue the maximum award of \$15 million Jared requested that public entities submit letters of support to NCTCOG by May 19, 2023. The application deadline is May 30, 2023. Additional details presented in Electronic Item 4.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval for the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) to pursue funding from the Federal Highway Administration Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program for two grant categories: 1) Corridor Program – develop an application to build up to seven hydrogen refueling sites near Alliance Texas Mobility Innovation Zone, Southern Dallas County Inland Port, and around the Texas Triangle, and a local freight Electric Truck Depot in Denton; 2) Community Program – develop an application to build up to 100 electric vehicle charging stations throughout the region to demonstrate the effectiveness of specialized technical teams for implementation. Melissa Baker (M); Kelly Porter (S). The motion passed unanimously.

5. **Director of Transportation Report on Selected Items:** Michael Morris briefly highlighted several items for the Committee. The US 75 Technology Lanes review of lighting sequence, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and local government lighting agreements implementation will be moving forward for safety reasons. He noted Tennessee's, Atlanta's, and Washington D.C.'s advancement of P3s or public-private partnerships. Michael encouraged anyone who wants to be Friends of the Texas Department of Transportation Safety Committee to email him or Natalie Bettger of the North Central Texas Council of Governments. Michael and State Representative Yvonne Davis will testify to the Special Bonds Committee on May 4, 2023, regarding Category 12 funding and the Regional Transportation Council's (RTC) partnership with TxDOT. The RTC, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Dallas-Fort Worth area, transmitted correspondence requesting its \$100 million back from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Michael briefed the Committee on the City of Dallas/Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) Silver Line Rail mediation. Also, progress is being made on mediations with Burlington Northern Santa Fe and transit authorities regarding the Trinity Railway Express and advancement of the BUILD grant.
6. **Federal and State Legislative Update:** Rebekah Gongora provided an update on federal and State legislative actions related to transportation and air quality issues affecting the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Transportation issues continue to be a focus for both the United States Congress and the Texas Legislature. In regard to committee hearings, the House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit met on March 28 to discuss the implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and focused on Buy America challenges, permitting delays, supply chain disruptions, inflation, discretionary grant process, and

workforce development. The House Transportation and Infrastructure schedule has upcoming hearings on Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization, pipeline safety reauthorization, and the Water Resources Development Act for 2024. Rebekah noted that the House approved House Bill 1, a \$302.6 billion budget on April 6, 2023, with \$136.9 billion in General Revenue spending and \$37.1 billion for the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). Article VII was also approved with Transportation amendments including the I-20 Passenger Rail Project with \$10 million in matching funds if the federal grant is awarded, a United Transportation Program (UTP) 10 percent discretionary cap, a federal funding report, and outreach and education programs on transportation safety. The Senate approved HB 1, a \$308 billion budget on April 17, 2023, with \$141.3 billion in General Revenue spending and \$37.4 billion for TxDOT. Article VII, which was also approved, included the following Transportation amendments: \$10 million in federal funds for the Southern Gateway Deck Park Phase 2 Project, if it meets federal funding requirements and grant is awarded. Rebekah provided information on bills of interest regarding transportation funding. Senate Bill (SB) 505 would create an additional \$400 registration fee on most new electric vehicles and \$200 registration renewal fee for all existing electric vehicles (approved in Senate Committee and by Full House on April 27, 2023). SB 1232 would extend Proposition 1 by eight years (approved in Senate and referred to House Appropriations on April 24, 2023). Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 2 would extend Proposition 7 by 10 years (approved in Senate and in House Appropriations on April 20, 2023). House Joint Resolution (HJR) 144 would authorize the use of money in the State Highway fund for roadways for seaports, airports, spaceports, land ports of entry, and international bridges (approved in House and referred to Senate Transportation on April 24, 2023). Bills of interest regarding safety include SB 1663, which would permit authority of a city to alter speed limits (approved in Senate and by House Committee on April 26, 2023, and HB 2224 approved in the House on April 20, 2023). HB 898 would increase penalties for Move Over Law or Slow Down (approved in House on April 25, 2023, and referred to Senate Transportation on April 26, 2023). Bills of Interest regarding temporary tags include HB 718, regarding the issuance of metal plates (approved by House Committee and placed on House calendar for May 1, 2023). HB 914 would establish temporary tag tampering penalties (approved in House and referred to Senate Criminal Justice on April 13, 2023). Bills of interest on air quality include SB 784, which would permit regulation of emissions by local governments (approved in Senate and in House Committee on April 18, 2023). SB 1017 would provide authority to regulate an energy source or engine (approved by Senate and House on April 26, 2023). Bills of interest on electric vehicles include SB 1001 which would regulate vehicle charging equipment (approved in Senate and in House Committee on April 24, 2023). SB 1732 addresses standards for charging stations (approved in Senate and by the House Committee on April 26, 2023). A Bill of interest regarding technology includes SB 2144, which would create an advanced air mobility technology advisory committee (approved in Senate and in House on April 27, 2023). Bills of Interest regarding Broadband include SB 1238 which would amend and update current law relating to broadband development (approved in Senate and in House State Affairs on April 20, 2023). HB 9 and HJR 125, regarding the development and funding of broadband (approved in House on April 27, 2023).

7. **Regional Scrap Tire Program:** Nicholas Vanhaasen briefly highlighted several items for the Committee regarding the Regional Scrap Tire Program. Some challenges related to scrap tires include that scrap tires are expensive and inconvenient for citizens to properly dispose of; “Mom & Pop” shops typically lack the resources for proper disposal of large quantities of tires; difficulty with enforcement and prosecution due to a lack of ordinances and education; illegal dumping on roadways, creeks, and private property; rural areas

typically experience more illegal dumping than urban areas; and lack of adequate markets. Nick explained the proper end-of-life tire cycle through the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's (TCEQ) "Scrap Tire Management Stream from Generator to End-Use Facility" graphic.: The total number of illegally dumped tires known by the TCEQ has decreased from 14,359,826 in April of 2018 to 12,185,301, as of May 2022. The Regional Tire Program, part of the Air Quality Initiatives recently received a commitment of \$490,000 from the Regional Transportation Council (RTC). A portion of this funding goes toward the continuation of a Regional Tire Task Force, an inter-department partnership and external subject-matter expert collaborative group created in December of 2021 to strategize development and implementation and to address regional scrap tire management in the 16-county region. The Task Force created the Regional Scrap Tire Model Ordinance, a unified and comprehensive plan with provisions a city and county can adopt and edit. The Model Ordinance was developed using the City of Dallas' updated ordinance as a template and then edited to incorporate aspects of Houston's ordinance. More information provided at <https://www.nctcog.org/envir/materials-management/regional-tire-task-force>. Sustainable tire recycling is one of 20 policies in the recently adopted Mobility Plan that cities and counties can voluntarily participate in to receive Transportation Development Credits (TDCs) by developing a plan, ordinance, or policy for transportation refuse recycling, or implement elements of a transportation refuse recycling plan. The Sustainable Tire Policy would receive three points maximum. Current proposed tire legislation. Nicholas highlighted current proposed tire legislation: HB 3282, HB 3352, and HB1502. Maps and additional information were provided in Electronic Item 7.

8. **Walk to School Promotion 2023:** Shawn Conrad provided an overview of activities planned for the 2023 Walk to School Day promotion and information for participation. Walk to School Day is an annual event where students from across the nation walk to school on the same day. Community presence on the streets serves as a reminder to help create calm, safe routes to school for students to walk and bicycle. This year, Walk to School Day is scheduled for October 4, 2023. Statistics show that students that walk or bike to school show up more alert and ready to learn. The event spotlights the benefits of active transportation to school, as well as the importance of safety on our community's roadways. The North Central Texas Council of Governments provided safety-related prizes and promotional items to schools to generate excitement and incentivize participation. The Dallas-Fort Worth region accounted for over half of the registered Walk to School Day events in the State of Texas. Staff encouraged everyone to save the date for Walk to School Day: Wednesday, October 4, 2023. Event preparation will begin in Spring 2023. Visit www.WalkBiketoSchool.com for more information about Walk to School Day and how-to guides for starting your own event. Municipalities were asked to collaborate with their local Independent School Districts and schools in their jurisdiction to hold joint events and raise community awareness. Contact Shawn Conrad at sconrad@nctcog.org for assistance in planning Walk to School Day events. To be added to the Walk to School Day 2023 mailing list, an interest form can be completed at www.nctcog.org/WalkToSchool. Additional information was included in Electronic Item 8.
9. **Air Quality Ozone: Federal vs. State:** Jenny Narvaez provided information on the national and state process for air quality standards and current local efforts to meet them. Sections 108 and 109 of the Clean Air Act govern the establishment, review, and revision, as appropriate, of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for each criteria pollutant to provide protection for the nation's public health and the environment. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is required to review the NAAQS every five years, which may or may not result in revision. If the EPA recommends a revision, the state has

one year to recommend designated areas to the EPA, which the EPA reviews. One year after, the EPA will make formal designations of nonattainment areas with associated classifications (marginal, moderate, serious, etc.). The state then has to develop State Implementation Plans (SIP) revisions showing how nonattainment areas will attain the standards by the designated due date. If an area fails to attain the standard, EPA will reclassify the area to a higher classification and give the area more time to attain. Federal standards are reviewed by the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC), which is an independent scientific review committee composed of seven members including: a member of National Academy of Sciences, a physician, and a State Air Pollution Control Agency representative. This committee reviews assessments and makes a recommendation to the EPA Administrator. This process involves planning, assessment, and rulemaking. The planning part includes consideration of new scientific information, policy-relevant issues, and other factors in developing plans for the review. Assessments entail an analysis of current scientific information, and its policy implications, particularly with regard to standards (indicator, averaging time, form, and level). The overall process for EPA revision of NAAQS includes the following assessments: Integrated Science Assessment (ISA), Risk/Exposure Assessment (REA), and Policy Assessment (PA). SIP revisions show how a nonattainment area will improve air quality and meet the NAAQS by the attainment deadline. Failure to submit or implement a SIP or submission of a SIP that is unacceptable to the EPA can result in the starting of a Federal Implementation Plan (FIP) clock, a SIP call, and EPA sanctions clock. Sanctions can include cutting off federal highway funds and setting more stringent pollution offsets for certain emitters. Electronic Item 9.1 contained a copy of draft correspondence from the Regional Transportation Council to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Details as presented were provided in Electronic Item 9.2.

10. **Fast Facts:** The following fast facts were provided by NCTCOG staff:

Aliyah Shaikh mentioned the Transportation Improvement Program Modification Submittal deadline, April 28, 2023, for the August 2023 cycle.

Travis Liska highlighted the Regional Sidewalk Geographic Information Systems Layer and mentioned completion of an assembly of sidewalk data layer. Details provided in Electronic Item 10.1.

Martin Bate noted the Fiscal Year 2024 – 2025 Policy Bundle's early deadline was March 31, 2023, and the final deadline is May 31, 2023. More information provided at: www.nctcog.org/policybundle. He also announced the Certification of Emerging and Reliable Transportation Technology (CERTT) Round 2.

Jesse Brown highlighted pertinent information for the Auto Occupancy/High Occupancy Vehicle Quarterly Subsidy Report. Additional information was provided in Electronic Item 10.2.

Camille Fountain noted the Traffic Incident Management Executive Level Training is scheduled on May 4, 2023, at 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. Details provided in Electronic Item 10.3. She also mentioned the 2023-2024 Regional Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC) Team designations. Details provided in Electronic Item 10.4.

Nicholas Vanhaasen provided an update on the 2023 Ozone Season. Additional details provided in Electronic Item 10.5.

Trey Pope noted the Air Quality Funding Opportunities for Vehicles website, www.nctcog.org/aqfunding, which is updated with air quality funding opportunities for available vehicles and programs.

Trey Pope highlighted the Local Clean Air Project Spotlight on the replacement project for Bimbo Bakeries in Fort Worth (Tarrant County). Fort Worth was awarded one all-electric terminal truck with 100 percent NOx Emissions Reduction at location, implemented in November 2022, awarded \$172,264 with total project cost of \$384,001. Additional information was provided in Electronic Item 10.6.

Joslyn Billings highlighted upcoming Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities events and noted that the Solar In Your Community Workshop with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), is scheduled on Friday, May 5, 2023, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm. Registration for the event and additional information on Clean Cities events is located at <https://www.dfwcleancities.org/events>.

Jackie Castillo mentioned that a public meeting was hosted on March 13. Presentations were provided on federal and local partnerships with Dallas Area Rapid Transit and the City of Dallas. Details provided in Electronic Item 10.7.

Taylor Benjamin noted that the Public Comments Report, which contained general public comments received from February 20, 2023, through March 19, 2023, was provided in Electronic Item 10.8.

Partner Progress Reports were provided in Electronic Item 10.9.

11. **Other Business (Old or New)**: There was no discussion on this item.
12. **Next Meeting**: The next meeting of the Surface Transportation Technical Committee is scheduled for 1:30 pm on May 26, 2023.

Meeting adjourned at 3:07 PM.