

North Central Texas Council of Governments

SUMMARY

North Texas Regional Integration of Sustainability Efforts (RISE) Coalition

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Virtual: [Microsoft Teams](#)

Chair: Alexander Pharmakis, City of Farmers Branch

Vice Chair: Lindsay Graf, City of Plano

1. Welcome and Introductions.

[Corinne Buckley \(NCTCOG\)](#) welcomed attendees and reviewed housekeeping items.

PRESENTATION

2. **Demonstrating Return on Conservation™.** Texan by Nature's Joni Carswell, CEO, and Jenny Burden, Director of Development, will share highlights from their [Return on Conservation™ report](#), which works to bring together stakeholders by exploring data and examples that indicate the full value of conservation.

[Joni Carswell, CEO, Texan by Nature](#), shared about the work of their conservation non-profit, bringing together community and conservation. She discussed their [Return on Conservation Report](#), which considers the financial, human, and natural resource impact of investing in conservation work. Texan by Nature's [Casemaker Tool](#) was also highlighted as a resource for stakeholders to calculate the Return on Conservation of their own projects. The presentation begins on slide 5 of the [meeting presentation slides](#).

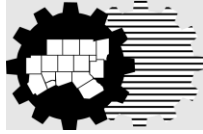
ACTION ITEMS

3. **Meeting Summary.** Review and approve the October 30, 2024, meeting summary, which can be viewed [here](#).

[Alexander Pharmakis \(City of Farmers Branch\)](#) made a motion to approve the meeting summary. [Lindsay Graf \(City of Plano\)](#) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION

4. **FY2025 Work Plan and Project Updates.** NCTCOG will discuss progress on the FY2025 Work Plan initiatives.



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NCTCOG reviewed the highest priority workshop and webinar topics and sought further input on the highest prioritized topic, Engaging with Communities on Sustainability. Larry Howe (Citizens' Climate Lobby) suggested the Friendly Climate Science workshops as a possible resource, as well as tying in the economic benefits of sustainability. Another suggestion made by Ted Spradley (Dallas College) was to target how to “sell” projects to uninterested parties that may not be interested but control the purse strings. Lauren Foust (City of Cedar Hill) recommended “scaling back” and starting with simple, basic information as many residents don't fully understand what sustainability encompasses. Anna Clark (Cooksey Communications) suggested tying discussions to the impact on health as a community level message. Finally, Brandi Kelp (City of Fort Worth) suggested hosting a Q&A session where the general public can ask sustainability professionals questions they might have related to everyday life.

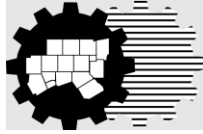
NCTCOG staff requested feedback on the Center of Development Excellence newsletter. Lauren Foust brought up that from a visual standpoint, the newsletter is very text heavy, so breaking up the content with blocks or photos may help draw the eyes better.

- **SECO Contract Scope of Work:** Discuss opportunities for cross collaboration with SECO work.

NCTCOG staff provided an update on projects within the SECO Contract scope of work that are connected to the work of RISE. Staff highlighted the 2025 LEED for Cities and Communities Cohort as an opportunity for communities to pursue this designation. Following up on discussions from the previous meeting, NCTCOG staff suggested the possibility of a roundtable and sought feedback from the group on what information would be useful. Alexander Pharmakis shared how the cohort helped with data collection and jumpstarted the application process. Staff sought feedback on who would be interested in participating in the roundtable, and Cory Heiple (City of Carrollton) offered to participate if there is an interest. Lindsay Graf shared that since they are almost finished with their application, a roundtable may not be beneficial to them, but they could see it benefiting those in the early stages of pursuing the designation. When asked about the need for support once the designation is achieved, Cory Heiple shared that cities go through a recertification process every 3-5 years.

NCTCOG staff also brought updates on the water and energy conservation signage and shared examples of possible language for energy signage. Lenna Smith (City of Plano) felt the signage could be a great idea, but for Plano, this is something they would develop in-house. Anna Clark suggested connecting with facilities and developing special messages for those that are over more energy intensive areas like HVAC. To further combat HVAC concerns, Jasleen Dhillon (SMU) suggested signage about the impacts of personal space heaters and alternatives. For the washing machine signage, Lauren Foust brought up that they only have washing machines in their animal shelter, so if other cities are in similar positions, developing this signage may not be the best use of resources. Ted Spradley

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shared that they use washing machines more for athletics, so they may benefit from this type of signage. Novella Landau (City of Carrollton) shared that they recently discussed developing a checklist with a variety of energy and water conservation efforts that businesses and residents can reference with links going to external pages with additional information. A similar checklist could be incorporated into signage efforts.

INFORMATION ITEMS

5. **FY2025 Member Cost Share Commitments.** NCTCOG will provide an update on the status of cost shares for FY2025.

NCTCOG staff shared who has committed cost shares to date. Those interested in joining the RISE Coalition can reach out to Corinne Buckley at cbuckley@nctcog.org to request an invoice or inquire about how to become a member.

6. **Bylaws Task Force.** The Bylaws Task Force will provide an update on recommended changes to the RISE Coalition Bylaws.

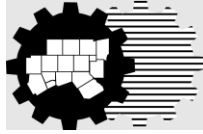
Alexander Pharmakis presented the recommended changes discussed by the Bylaws Task Force. A vote to approve the revised RISE Coalition Bylaws will be conducted virtually once members have had adequate time to review.

7. **89th Texas Legislative Session Update.** NCTCOG staff will discuss the status of bills of interest. RISE Coalition members are invited to share any pertinent sustainability issues, topics, news, or bills of interest to date.

NCTCOG staff shared a high-level overview of sustainability-related bills being tracked. A full matrix of related bills is available [here](#). Alexander Pharmakis inquired whether any bills related to addressing local control had been introduced, and NCTCOG staff confirmed that as of now no related bills had been filed. Larry Howe brought up SB 2435 from the 88th session, which would have required the adoption of 2021 Energy Codes, and asked if the bill had been reintroduced. Joaquin Escalante (NCTCOG) confirmed that the bill had been reintroduced, and he is tracking its progress.

8. **NCTCOG Regional Opportunities.** NCTCOG will go over other opportunities in the North Central Texas region that relate to sustainability and the Coalition's focus areas.

- **Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Update:** NCTCOG staff will provide an update on the development of the Dallas-Fort Worth Air Quality Improvement Plan, which is being funded under the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants.



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Savana Nance (NCTCOG) shared an update on the Dallas-Fort Worth Air Quality Improvement Plan (DFW AQIP). Savana highlighted the differences between the Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP), completed in March 2024, and the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) that is currently being developed. The CCAP will be more extensive than the PCAP and will utilize an updated greenhouse gas emissions inventory to develop projections and goals. Further information about the DFW AQIP can be found on the [program's website](#), and any feedback can be sent to dfwaqip@publicinput.com.

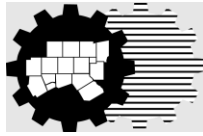
- **Clean Heavy Duty Vehicles Grant:** NCTCOG staff will provide information on a recently awarded grant which will provide over \$60 million to the region for funding for the purchase of Class 6 and 7 zero-emission vehicles.

Savana Nance introduced the North Texas Zero-Emission Vehicle Project (NTx-ZEV), funded through the EPA's Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles Program. Class 6 or 7 zero-emission vehicles are eligible for this program, with a call for projects expected to open in Spring 2025. Savana highlighted the benefits of this program, such as increasing available funding for hydrogen fuel cell vehicles and electric vehicles, as well as supporting a reduction in nitrogen oxides emitted into the atmosphere. Informational webinars will be held on March 25, 26, & 27 from 10:30 – 11:30 a.m., with registration open on the [DFW Clean Cities website](#).

NCTCOG staff also presented updates on upcoming meetings, webinars, workshops, and opportunities that may be of interest to members. Full details of all opportunities can be found in the [meeting presentation](#).

- [DFW Clean Cities Stakeholder Input Session](#) – Provide input on the design of projects to implement alternative transportation technologies.
- [DFW Clean Cities Annual Survey](#) – Local fleet efforts to reduce fuel use and emissions are tracked through the annual survey. The 2024 Annual Survey is now open for submission.
- [Planning Resilient EV Charging for North Texas Stakeholder Group](#) – Provide input to assist with developing the North Texas Resilient Electric Vehicle Charging Plan.
- [Drive Electric Earth Month](#) – If you are interested in having a Drive Electric Earth Month booth at your event, please reach out to cleancities@nctcog.org.
- [Air Quality Funding Opportunities](#) – Multiple funding opportunities for projects that address air quality are currently open.
- [Texas Emissions Reduction Plan \(TERP\) Funding Opportunities](#) – TERP, a TCEQ program that works to reduce nitrous oxide emissions by upgrading outdated vehicles and equipment, has multiple funding opportunities open or expected to open soon.
- [DOE-Google Energy Skilled Collaboration](#) – The DOE has announced a new partnership with Google that will make it easier for customers to make energy-conscious decisions.

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- [Focus North Texas 2025](#) – Registration is open for Focus North Texas 2025, which is to be held on February 21, 2025. This year's theme is "Let's Grow Together".
- [North Central Texas, where nature + economic development happens \(Eco-Tourism\) Webinar](#) – Learn about the Trinity Coalition's new mapping tool at the North Central Texas Economic Development District's (NCTEDD) upcoming webinar on March 10, 2025.
- [11th Annual TRACS Summit](#) – Register to attend the 2025 TRAC's conference, to be held at Texas State University on April 6-8, 2025.
- [EarthX2025 Congress of Conferences](#) – Register for the 5-day Congress of Conference event. The event will take place at the Hilton Anatole on April 21-25, 2025.

OTHER BUSINESS

9. **Participant Roundtable.** Participants will have an opportunity to share activities happening in their communities/organizations to identify areas for collaboration and sharing sustainability programs or success stories.

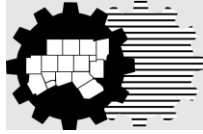
Lindsay Graf, City of Plano – Plano is continuing work on their residential food scrap composting program and is doing additional marketing to help the program grow. Plano is also brainstorming opportunities for their third annual employee green week in April. They are hoping to use funding to upgrade one of their EV chargers to a DC fast charger and are continuing to work with UNT to replace air sensors throughout the city. Finally, Plano is in the process of developing a child-focused sustainability class to be offered during spring break.

Alexander Pharmakis, City of Farmers Branch – Farmers Branch applied for the urban heat measuring grant and for an electric vehicle grant. They are continuing to move forward with their LEED for Cities designation. Farmers Branch is also making decent progress with the SolSmart designation and is going through the approval process with city council and zoning.

Lauren Foust, City of Cedar Hill – Cedar Hill received an EECBG equipment voucher to replace an EV charging station at their new library with a fast charger.

Kylie Wieden, City of Grand Prairie – Grand Prairie is still in the beginning stages of developing a sustainability plan. They are in the process of speaking with other departments to understand what sustainability projects are being done.

Dorothy Kindell, TRWD – TRWD is wrapping up their sustainability plan with their consultant and is in the process of going through the recommended sustainability actions. They are identifying those that are targeted at environmental sustainability and can be completed within the next two years.



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Rosaerlinda Cisneros, City of Dallas – Dallas is on the fifth year of their comprehensive climate action plan, so they are working on a Phase I assessment of the plan. They are currently focusing on the work being done by five of the city departments and reviewing their milestones to understand where improvements can be made to make milestones more actionable or measurable. They will be meeting with departments and gathering lessons learned.

Novella Landau, City of Carrollton – Carrollton's first sustainability plan was adopted at the last council meeting.

Brandi Kelp, City of Fort Worth – Fort Worth recently hired Allison Docker as their new greenspace champion and are working across departments with their open space master plan. There has been a lot of interest from Fort Worth in forming a regional greenspace group, and they would like to keep exploring the potential of this idea.

Julissa Amador, City of Denton – Denton recently relaunched their Green Business Program. They were considering pursuing LEED for Cities but are putting a pause on this as they are focusing on their sustainability program. Denton is also working with UNT on a textile initiative that will divert textiles for landfills.

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

Larry Howe requested an update from fleet managers with electric vehicles on how things are going thus far.

11. **Next Meeting Date.** The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, May 14, 2025. This meeting will be held in-person at the NCTCOG Offices. [Add to calendar.](#)

Upcoming meeting dates for 2025

- July 30, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. – Online

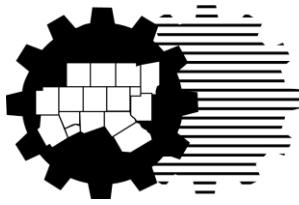
12. **Adjournment.**

Alexander Pharmakis made a motion to end the meeting. Lindsay Graf seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

If you have any questions regarding the meeting or agenda items, please contact Corinne Buckley at (817) 704-2510 or cbuckley@nctcog.org.

If you plan to attend this public meeting and you have a disability that requires special arrangements at the meeting, please contact Ashley Barnett at (817) 695-9231 or abarnett@nctcog.org at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Reasonable accommodations will be made to assist your needs.

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RISE Coalition Meeting

9:30 am, Wednesday, January 29, 2025

Microsoft Teams

Attendees

RISE Coalition Members		
Name	Entity	Signature
Alexander Pharmakis (Chair)	City of Farmers Branch	X
Lindsay Graf (Vice Chair)	City of Plano	X
Cory Heiple	City of Carrollton	X
Lauren Foust	City of Cedar Hill	X
Rosaerlinda Cisneros	City of Dallas	X
Katherine Barnett	City of Denton	
Avery Pesek	City of Fort Worth	
Kylie Wieden	City of Grand Prairie	X
Dorothy Kindell	TRWD	X

Other Attendees	
Name	Entity
Julissa Amador	City of Denton
Lenna Smith	City of Plano
Jasleen Dhillon	SMU
Krista Pender	City of Carrollton
James A. McClinton	Tarrant County
K. Qadri	Dallas
La Juana Chambers Lawson	Council District 1, City of San Antonio
Eric Tate	Atmos Energy
Jose Canario	Eveeo Inc.
Miranda Ynostrosa	City of Cedar Hill
Larry Howe	Citizens Climate Lobby
Ted Spradley	Dallas College, City of Farmers Branch
Novella Landau	City of Carrollton
Anna Clark	Cooksey Communications
Rebecca Pearce	SMU
Mariah Peake	Texas PACE Authority
Brandi Kelp	City of Fort Worth
Umair Surani	McKinstry
Crysta Guzman	NCTCOG
Joaquin Escalante	NCTCOG
Vivek Thimmavajhala	NCTCOG