

TRACES Meeting

*Transportation Resource Agency Consultation and
Environmental Streamlining*



North Central Texas Council of Governments

Transportation and Environment & Development Departments

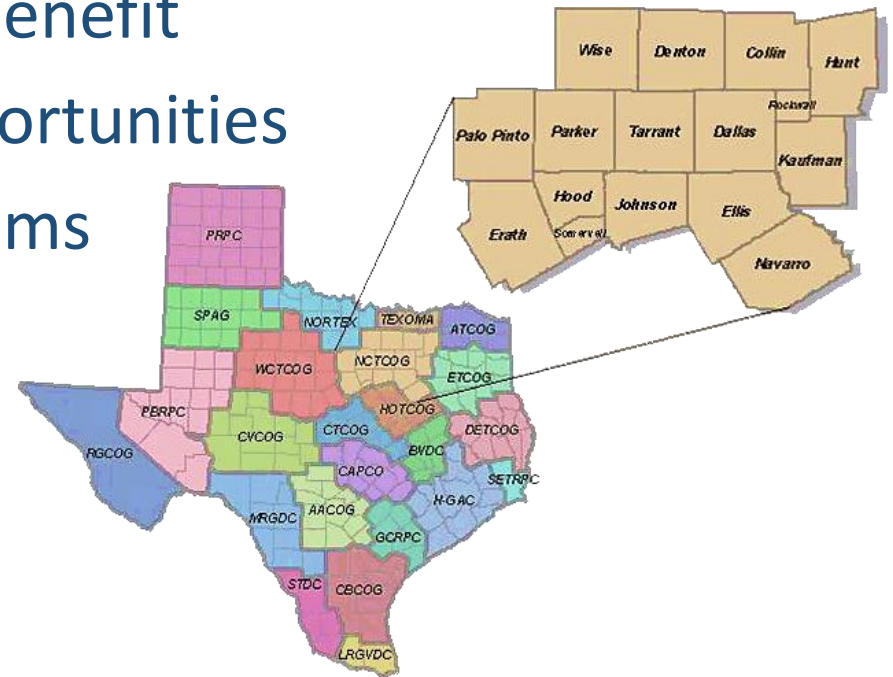
June 17, 2015

Agenda

1. What is NCTCOG
2. Mobility 2040 Discussion
3. NCTCOG Regional Ecosystem Framework
4. Environment & Development Programs Update
5. Mitigation and Enhancement Concepts
6. Future Opportunities for Coordination
7. Discussion

What is NCTCOG?

- Voluntary association of local governments
- Established in 1966
- Assists local governments in:
 - Planning for common needs
 - Cooperating for mutual benefit
 - Recognizing regional opportunities
 - Resolving regional problems
 - Making joint decisions
- One of 25 COGs in Texas



What is NCTCOG?

Agency Departments:

- Agency Administration
- Community Services
- Emergency Preparedness
- **Environment & Development**
- Executive Director's Office
- Public Affairs
- Research & Information Services
- **Transportation**
- Workforce Development

NCTCOG Transportation Department

- NCTCOG Transportation Department and the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) form the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Dallas-Fort Worth area.
- Federally designated as MPO in 1974.
- Work with transportation providers to address complex transportation needs.
- RTC, the 43-member independent transportation policy body of the MPO, oversees planning and allocates federal, state, and regional funding.

Transportation – Environmental Linkages

Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL)
Transportation Resource Agency Consultation
and Environmental Streamlining (TRACES)

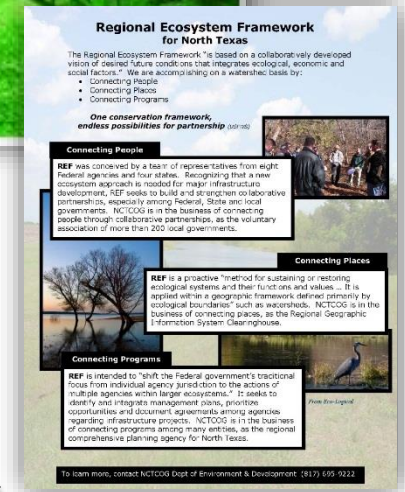
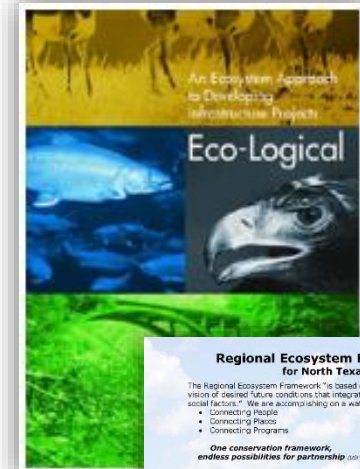
2008 FHWA Eco-Logical Grant

Regional Ecosystem Framework (REF)

REF Documented in Mobility 2035

2013-2015 Implementing REF Project (Pilot Study)

Integrate into Mobility 2040



NCTCOG Environment & Development Department

- Works with a diverse set of stakeholders (e.g. local governments, water districts, state and federal agencies) to address regional challenges and infrastructure concerns associated with water resource management, watershed protection, solid waste management, energy and water conservation, land development and conservation, and public works.
- Has various committees that work to find solutions to regional and common challenges.
- Grants and community/partners cost-share models fund work activities.



Mobility 2040: The Long-Range Transportation Plan for North Central Texas

**North Central Texas Council of Governments
Transportation and Environment & Development Departments
June 17, 2015**

Federally Required Transportation Plans

Level	Planning Product	Planning Horizon	Responsible Entities
State Level Planning	Statewide Transportation Plan	20 years	TxDOT
	Unified Transportation Program	10 years	TxDOT
	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)	4 years	TxDOT
Metropolitan Level Planning	Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)	20 years	MPO
	Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	2 - 3 years	MPO

What is the MTP?



Represents a blueprint for the region's multimodal transportation system



Covers at least a 20-year timeframe



Responds to goals



Identifies policies, programs, and projects for continued development

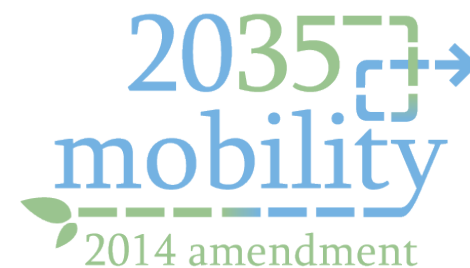


Guides the expenditure of federal and state transportation funds

Current MTP

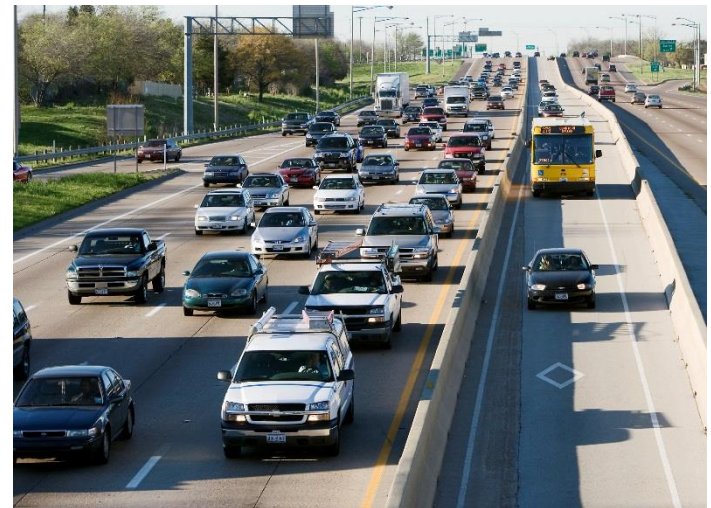
Mobility 2035 – 2014 Amendment

- Adopted by the Regional Transportation Council in November 2014
- Calls for \$94.5 billion in transportation improvements through 2035
 - Recommends 2,200 new lane miles on the region's freeways, tollways, and tolled managed lanes
 - Calls for 500 miles of passenger rail by 2035
 - Supports off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities
 - Continues programs aimed at reducing travel and creating a more efficient transportation system
- Meets all applicable federal transportation planning and air quality regulations

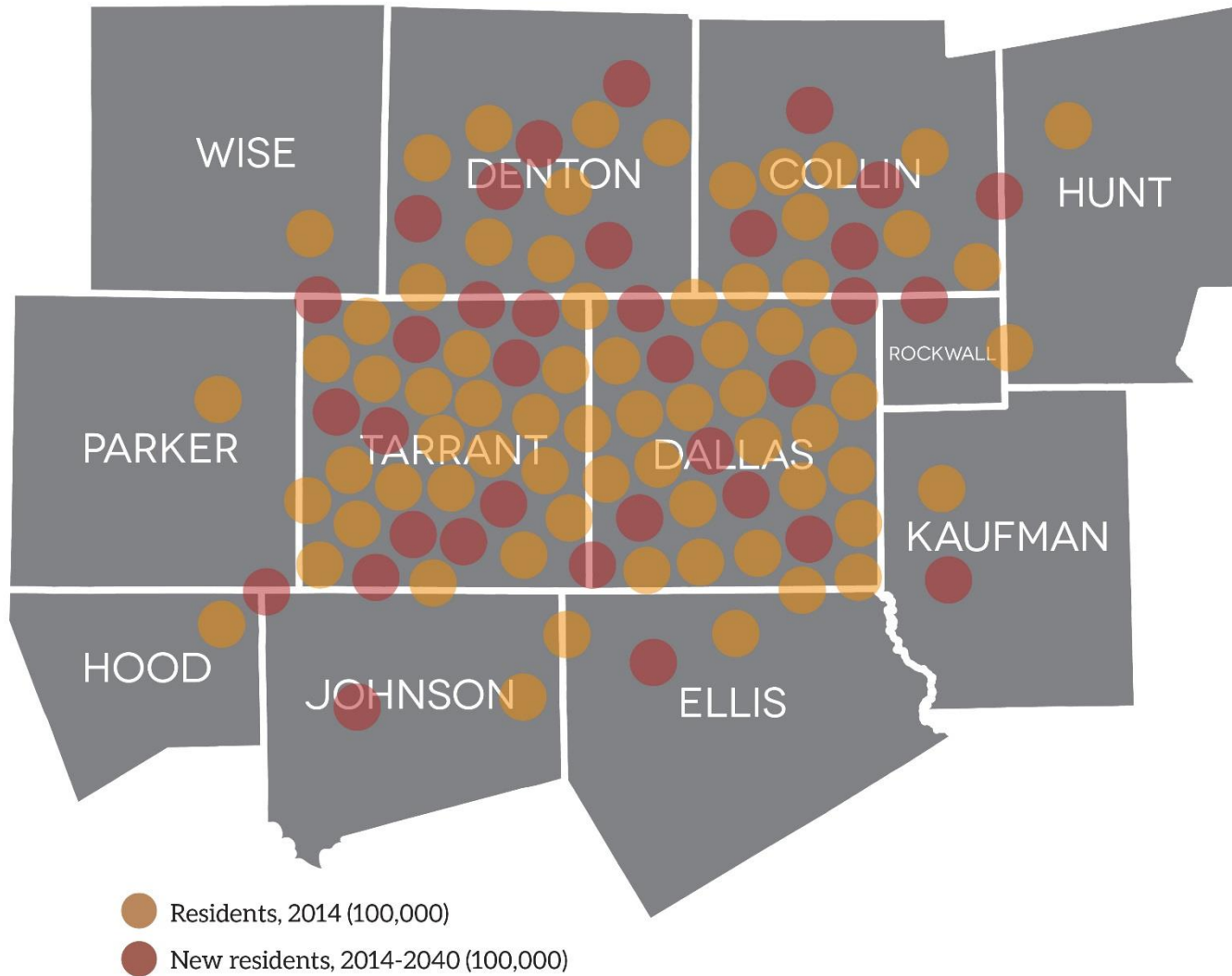


What's in the MTP?

- Financial Reality
- Social Considerations
- Environmental Considerations
- Operational Efficiency
 - Congestion Management
 - Safety and Security
 - Transportation System Management and Operations
 - Sustainable Development
- Mobility Options
 - Active Transportation
 - Aviation
 - Freight
 - Roadway
 - Transit
- Regional Performance



Regional Growth: 2014-2040



Mobility 2040 Development

Planning Horizon

2040

Demographics

3.7 million more people
1.9 million more jobs

Financial Assumptions

Dependent on legislative action and
RTC direction

Planning Requirements

Pending official guidance on MAP-21
or other legislative action

Policy Considerations

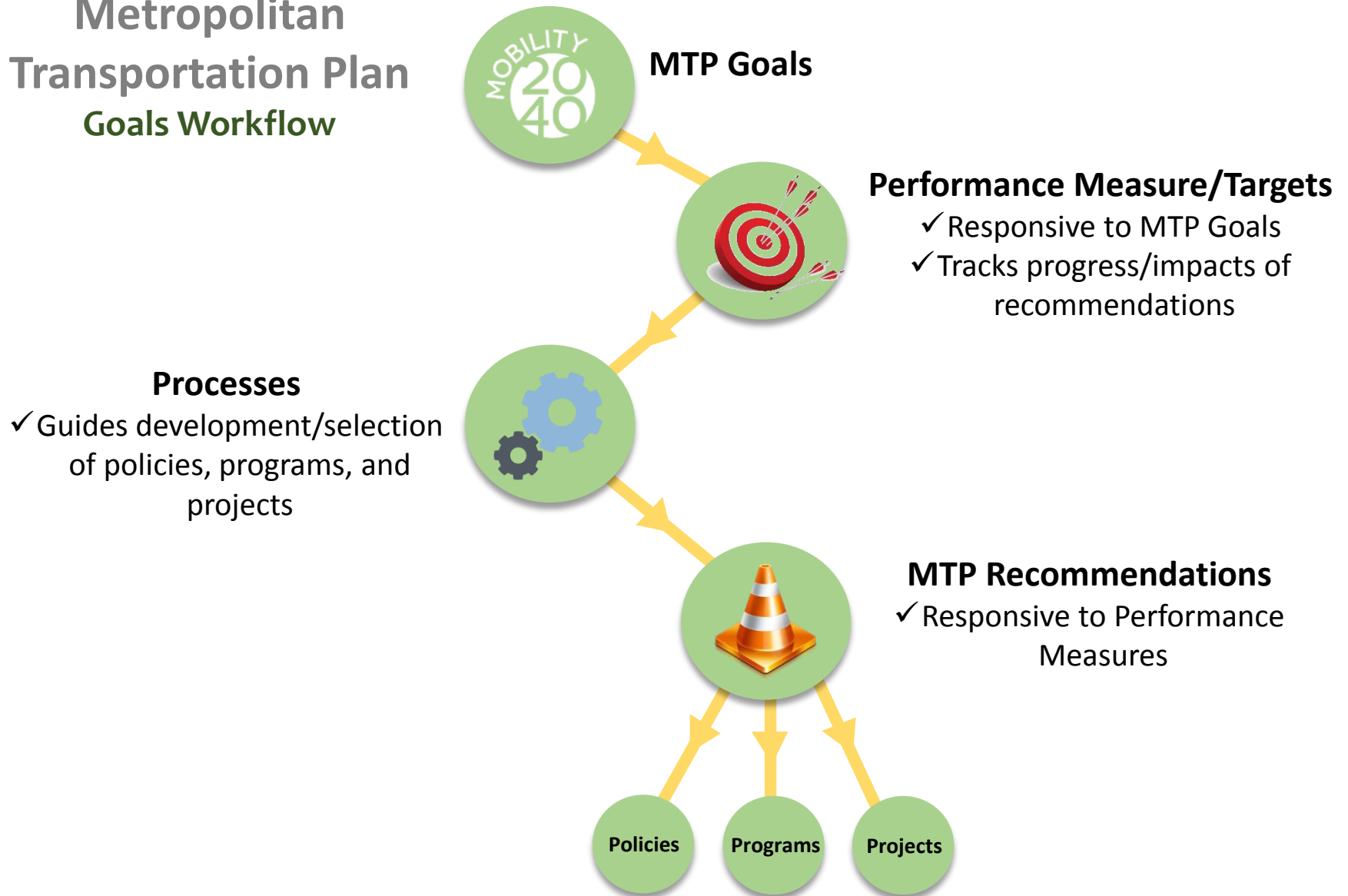
Equity, environment, and economics
balance
Infrastructure resiliency
Comprehensive view of corridor
evaluation

Recommendations

Dependent on demographics,
financial assumptions, planning
requirements, and policy
considerations

Mobility 2040 Development

Metropolitan Transportation Plan Goals Workflow



Environmental Policy Discussion

Reference Handout 1

Proposed Changes to Mobility 2035 Environmental Policies:

- Protect, retain, restore, or enhance the region's environmental assets ~~through avoiding, minimizing, and/or compensating for the effects of~~ during planning and implementation of transportation programs and projects.
- Work cooperatively with regulatory and conservation partners to develop innovative approaches that meet their conservation priorities and ~~expedite~~ facilitate the delivery of transportation projects.
- Encourage transportation programs and projects that provide appropriate access to the natural environment to support healthy lifestyles.

Draft Air Quality Policies

Reference Handout 1

Mobility 2035 Air Quality Policies:

- Pursue successful transportation conformity determinations of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program consistent with federal and state guidelines.
- Provide technical assistance and analysis to attain and maintain NAAQS and reduce negative impacts of other air pollutants.
- Support and implement education, operations, technological, and other innovative strategies that improve air quality in North Central Texas including participation in collaborative efforts with local, regional, state, and federal stakeholders.
- Support and implement strategies that promote energy conservation, reduce demand for energy needs, reduce petroleum consumption, and/or decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

Draft Sustainable Development Policies

Reference Handout 1

Mobility 2035 Sustainable Development Policies:

- Support mixed-use, infill, and transit-oriented developments that utilize system capacity, reduce vehicle miles of travel, and improve air quality through improved rail mobility and access management.
- Promote livable communities that offer safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices; contain equitable and affordable housing; and enhance economic competitiveness which support the HUD-DOT-EPA Interagency Partnership Principles of Livability.
- Plan and implement multimodal transportation options that connect and compliment a variety of land uses while serving diverse demographic groups.
- Encourage sustainability through a cooperative process of preservation, integration, and development of land which supports healthy transitions between ranges of development possibilities from natural areas to the urban core.

Environmental Considerations Chapter

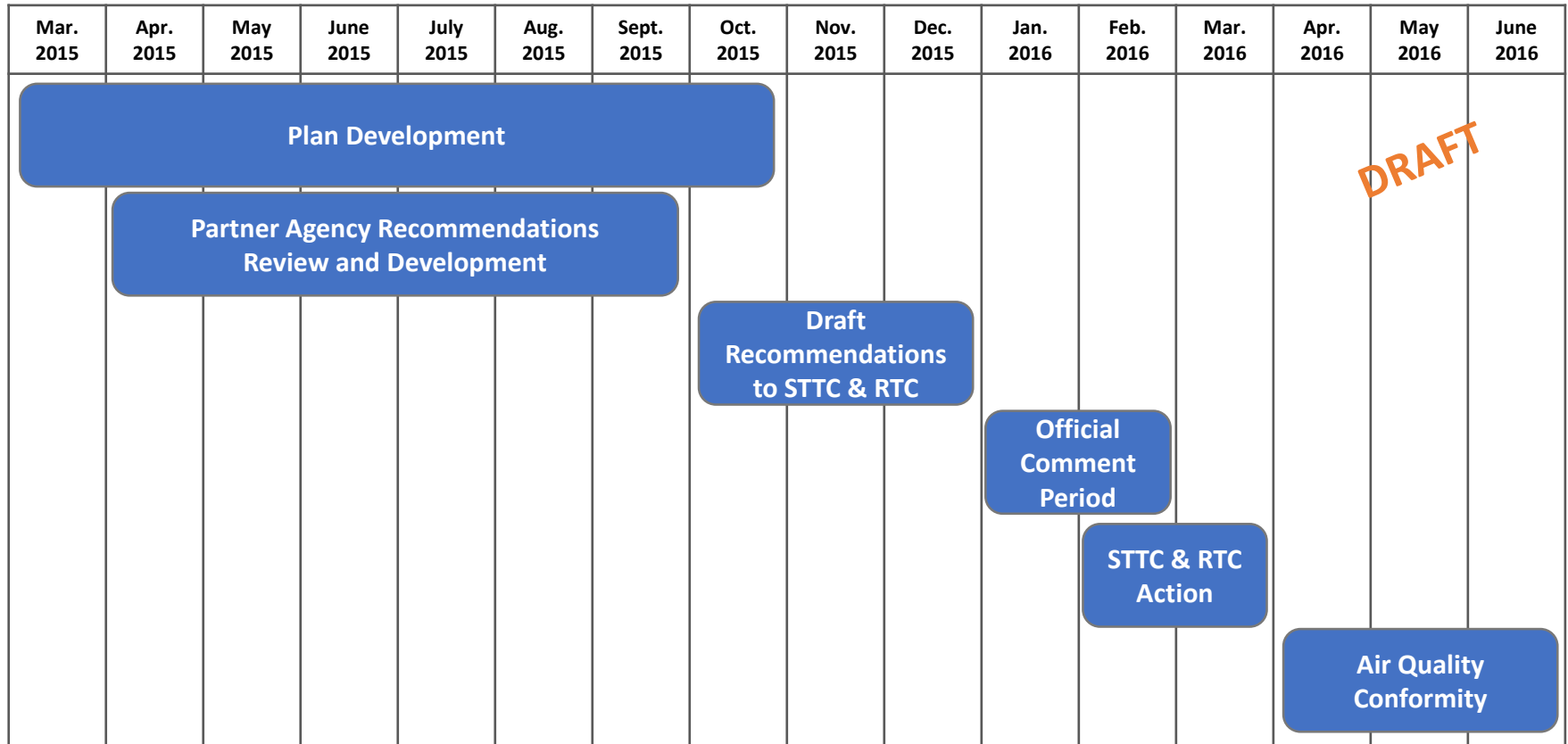
Existing Elements:

- Air Quality
- North Central Texas Natural Environment
- Ecosystem Approach to Developing Infrastructure Projects
- Mitigating Transportation Impacts
- Environmental Scoring

New Elements:

- Public Health
- Climate Considerations
- Stakeholder Coordination

Mobility 2040 Timeline



To find out more about the Mobility 2040, visit us at:

www.nctcog.org/mobility2040

Email questions or comments to: mobilityplan@nctcog.org

Regional Ecosystem Framework



North Central Texas Council of Governments

Transportation and Environment & Development Departments

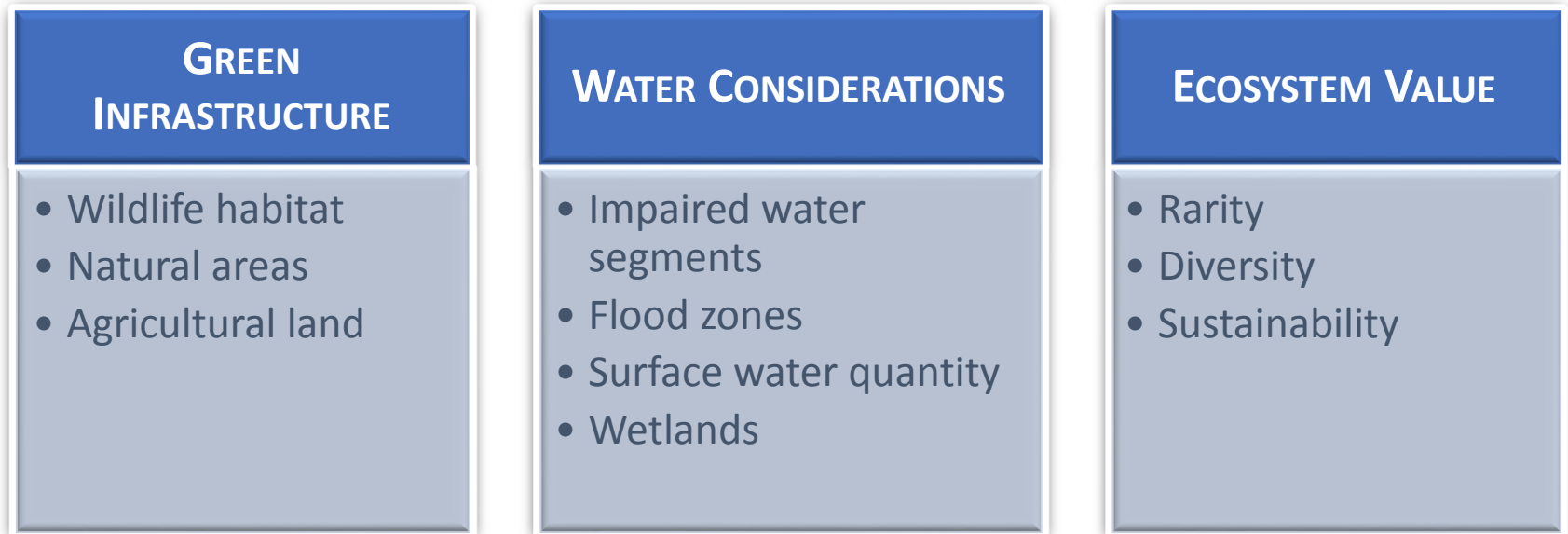
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Introducing Eco-Logical at NCTCOG

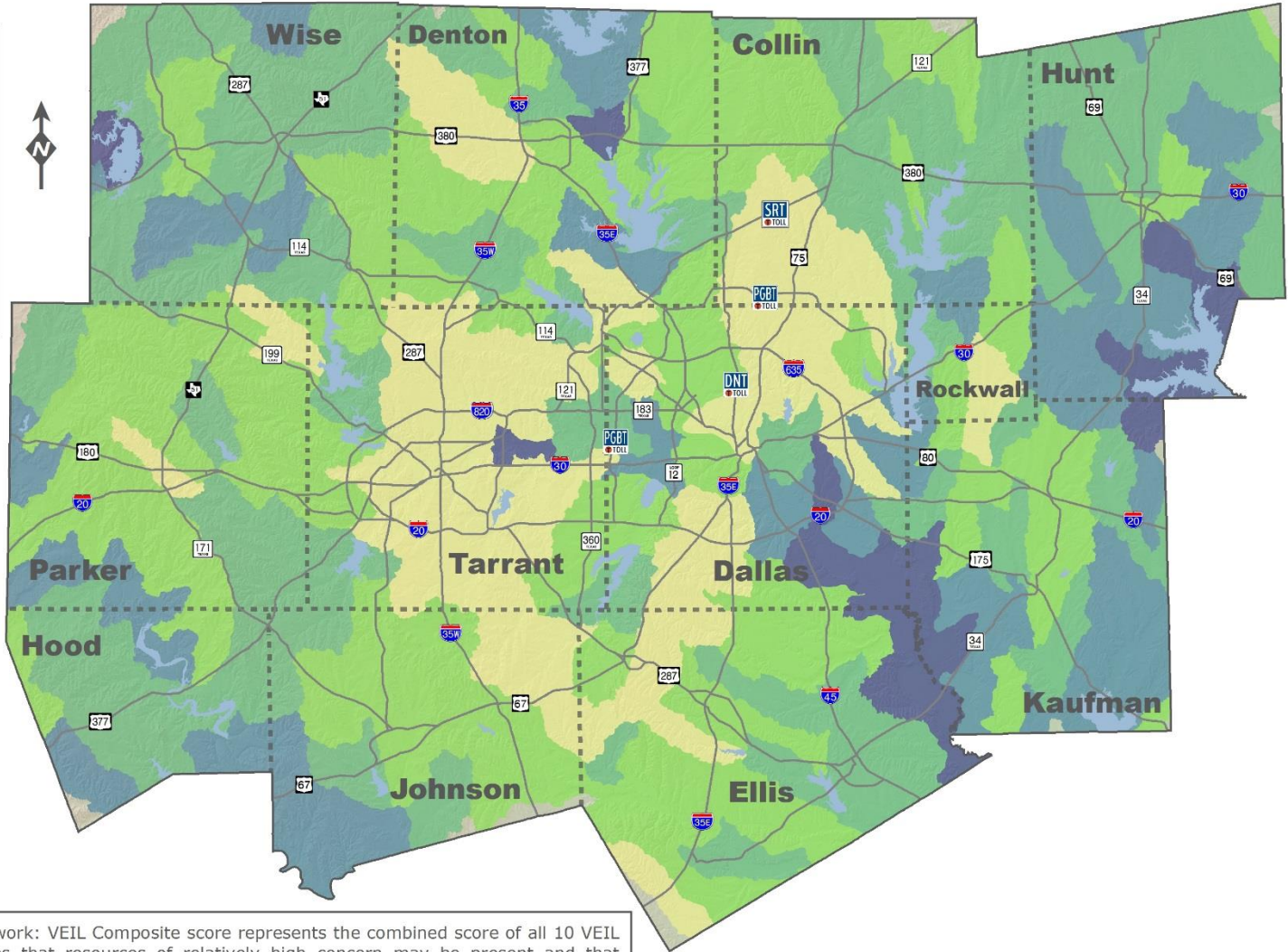
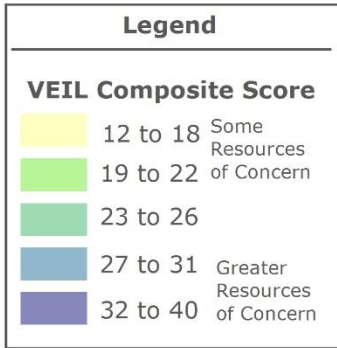
2007: FHWA Eco-Logical Grant Program Recipient

Project Focus: Develop Regional Ecosystem Framework (REF) to help identify, assess, and avoid environmental impacts of proposed infrastructure projects and to enhance multi-agency understanding of critical resource protection areas.

REF Layers



Regional Ecosystem Framework: VEIL Composite

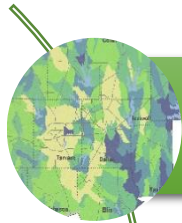


The Regional Ecosystem Framework: VEIL Composite score represents the combined score of all 10 VEIL layers. A higher score indicates that resources of relatively high concern may be present and that additional review, documentation, and consultation with the applicable agency may be needed. The VEIL layers include: Green Infrastructure (Wildlife Habitat, Natural Areas, Agricultural Land); Water Quality and Flooding (Impaired Water Segments, Flood Zones, Surface Water Quantity, and Wetlands); and Ecosystem Value (Rarity, Diversity, and Ecosystem Sustainability). Data sources include the Texas GRID and EPA Region 6 Regional Ecosystem Assessment Protocol data. This information has been developed for the Dallas-Fort Worth MPA for use in long-range planning. These scores are meant to be used as a preliminary screening tool for potential impact identification. For more information on the calculations for this layer, please visit www.nctcog.org/REF.

Implementing Eco-Logical at NCTCOG

2013: Received SHRP2 Lead Adopter Incentive Implementation Assistance Funds

PLANNING



Update REF and Identify Mitigation Focus Areas

PROJECT



Apply REF to Corridor Feasibility Study

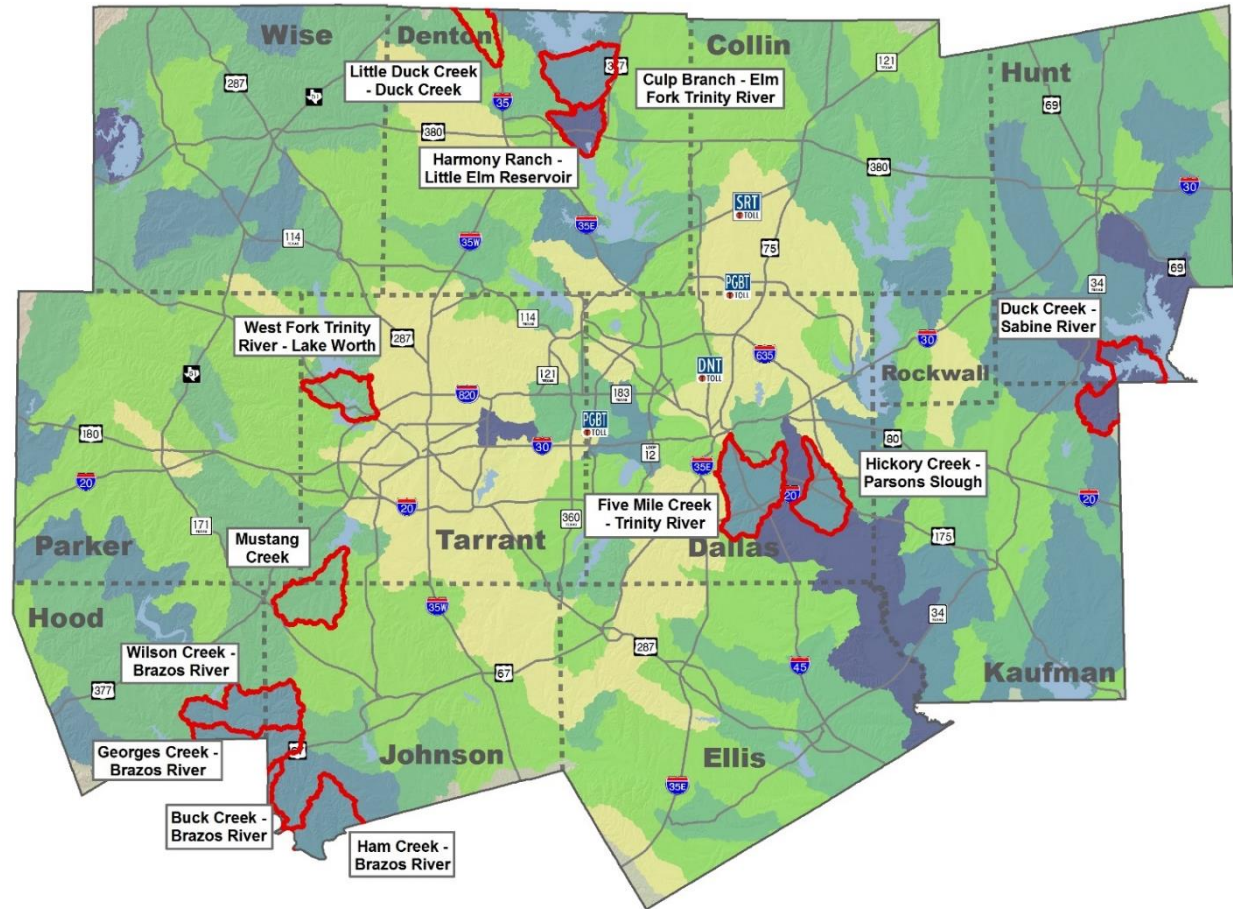
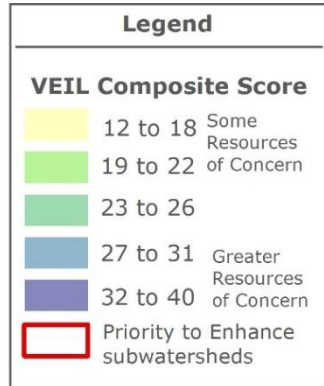
MITIGATION



Implement a Regional Shared Value Mitigation Program

Planning Level Emphasis

Subwatersheds Classified as 'Priority to Enhance'

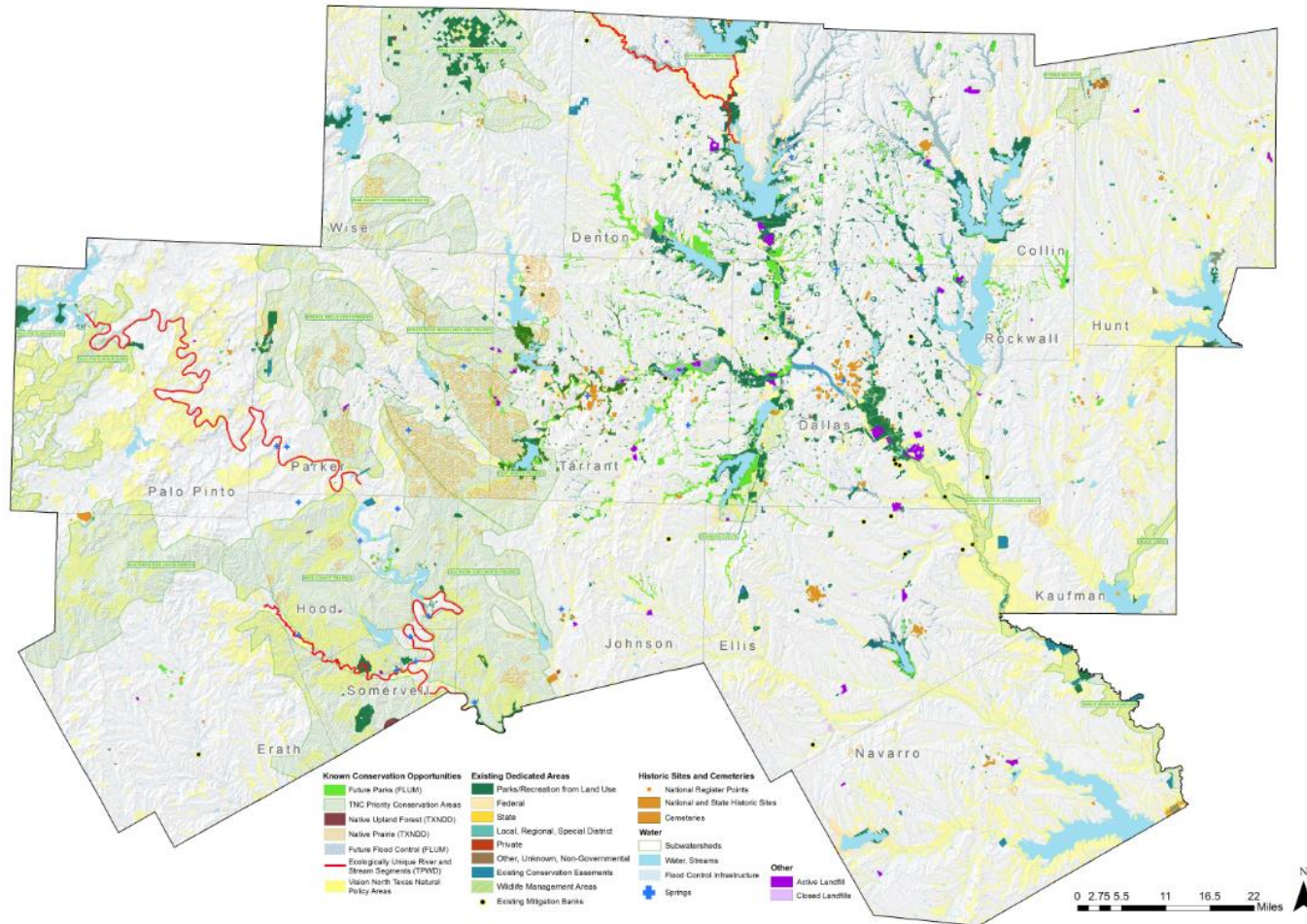


The Regional Ecosystem Framework: VEIL Composite score represents the combined score of all 10 VEIL layers. A higher score indicates that resources of relatively high concern may be present and that additional review, documentation, and consultation with the applicable agency may be needed. Subwatersheds outlined in red are designated as areas that should be a 'Priority to Enhance' in terms of ecosystem value, green infrastructure, or water considerations. These designations are intended to help prioritize regional conservation and mitigation. This information has been developed for the Dallas-Fort Worth MPA for use in long-range planning. For more information on the calculations for this layer, please visit www.nctcog.org/REF.



Planning Level Emphasis

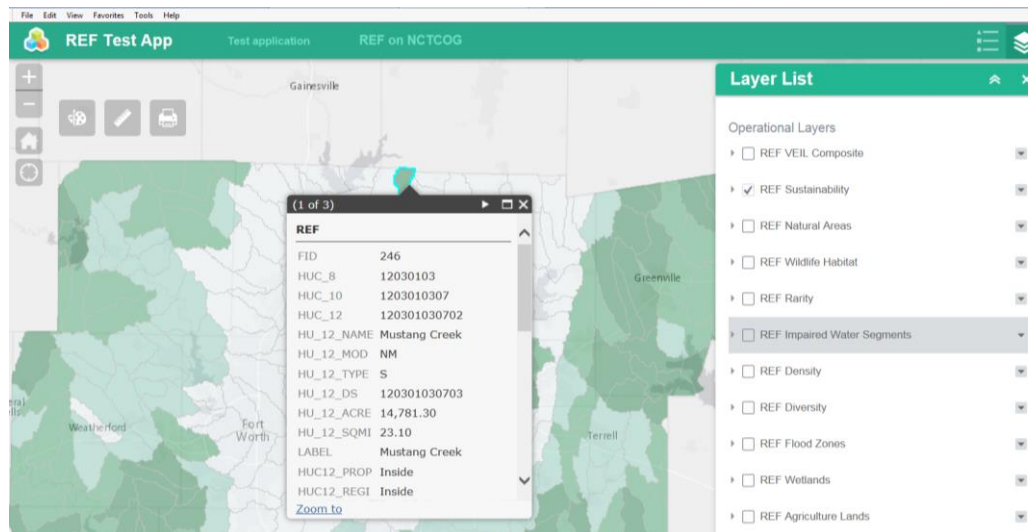
North Central Texas Known Conservation Opportunities



Planning Level Emphasis

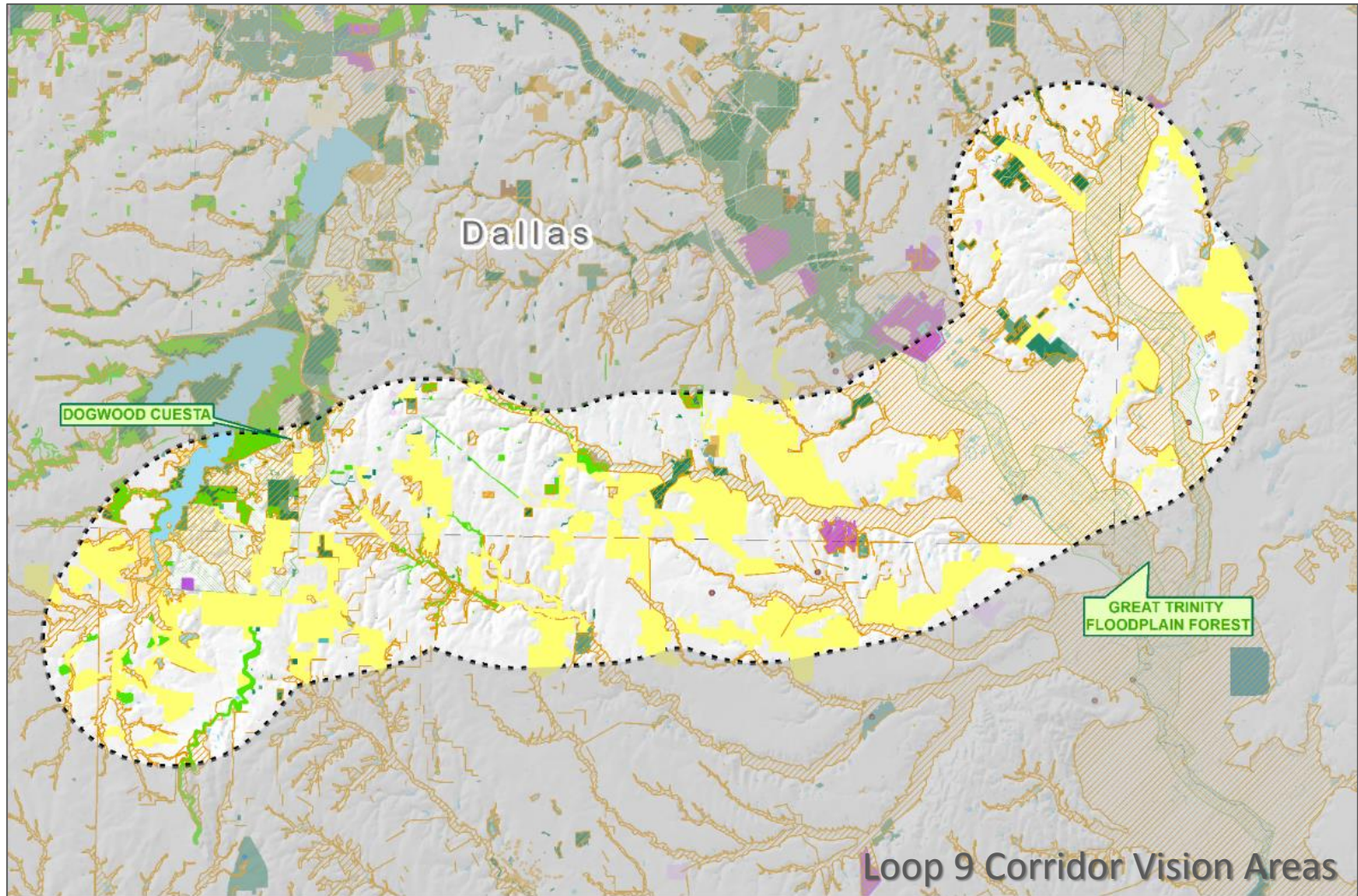
Regional Ecosystem Framework Website Development

- Interactive website is undergoing beta testing.
- This preliminary screening tool will allow transportation partners and local governments to identify potential environmental impacts of transportation projects and potential mitigation areas to offset impacts.



Project Level Emphasis

Application of REF to Corridor Feasibility Study



Mitigation Emphasis

Regional Shared Value Mitigation Program

Effort to facilitate transportation project delivery, while enhancing resource stewardship through a coordinated regional approach.

- Develop Potential Mitigation Project Database
- Prioritize Shared Value Mitigation Projects
- Provide Feedback to REF
- Reserve Funds for Pilot Program



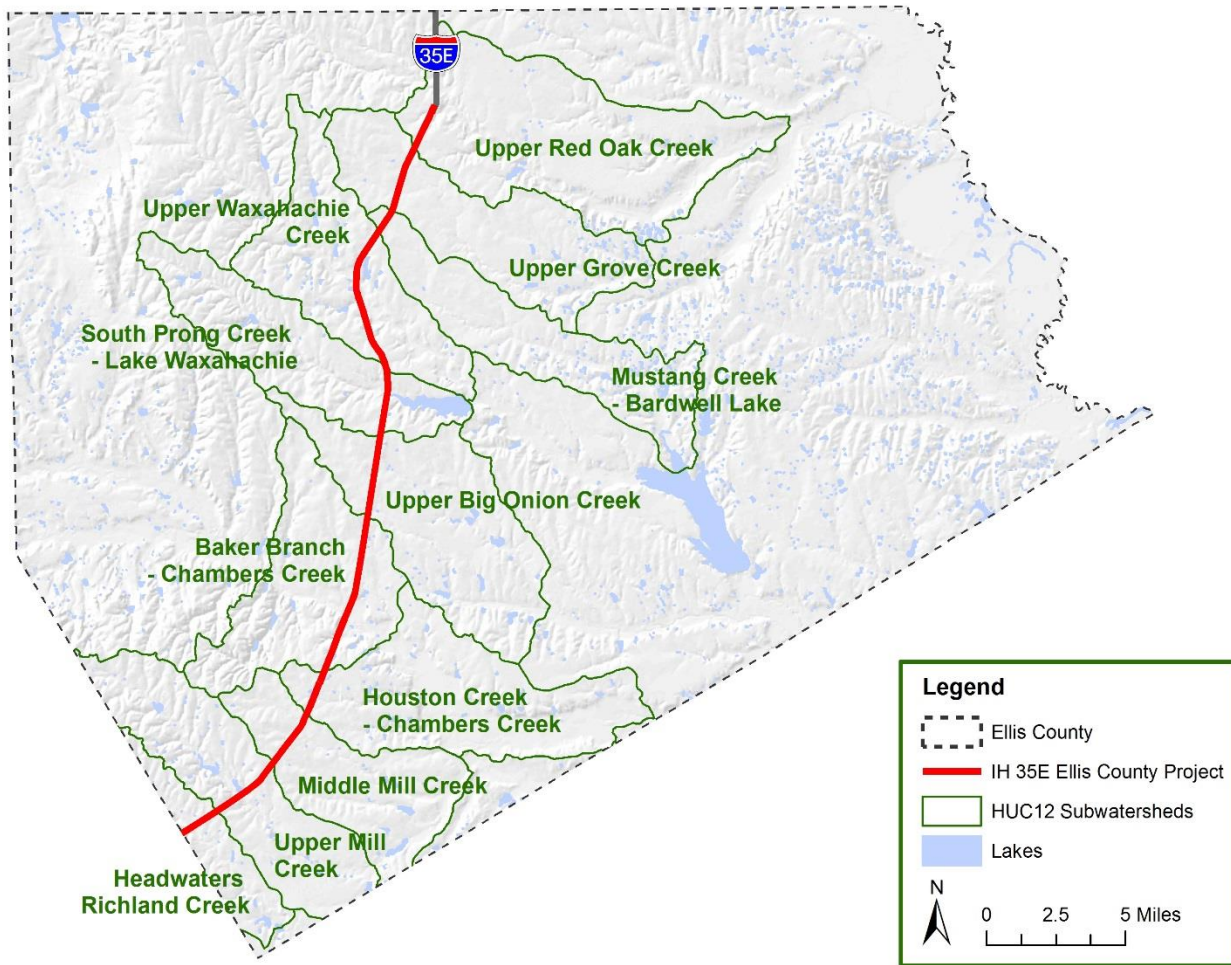
REF Integration

Reference Handout 2

Roadway Environmental Scoring Results Table (Preliminary Screening Tool for Potential Impact Identification)		
Resource Category	Scoring Question	IH 35E Ellis County US 77 (North of Waxahachie to Bigham Road)
Water	Within 1.0 miles of the 100 year flood plain?	N
	Within 1.0 miles of an Impaired Water Segment?	N
	Within 1.0 miles of an NLCD wetland?	Y
	Surface Water Percent	1
Ecology	Within 1.0 miles of a federal/state park or wildlife area?	N
	Within a Priority Conservation Area as designated by The Nature Conservancy?	N
	Within 1.0 miles of an area with an REF VEIL Diversity score of 5?	N
	Within 1.0 miles of an area with an REF VEIL Rarity score of 5?	N
	Within 1.0 miles of an area with an REF VEIL Ecosystem Sustainability score of 5?	N
Land Cover	% Wildlife Habitat	5
	% Agriculture	2
	% Wetlands	1

REF Integration

IH 35E Ellis County - Subwatersheds



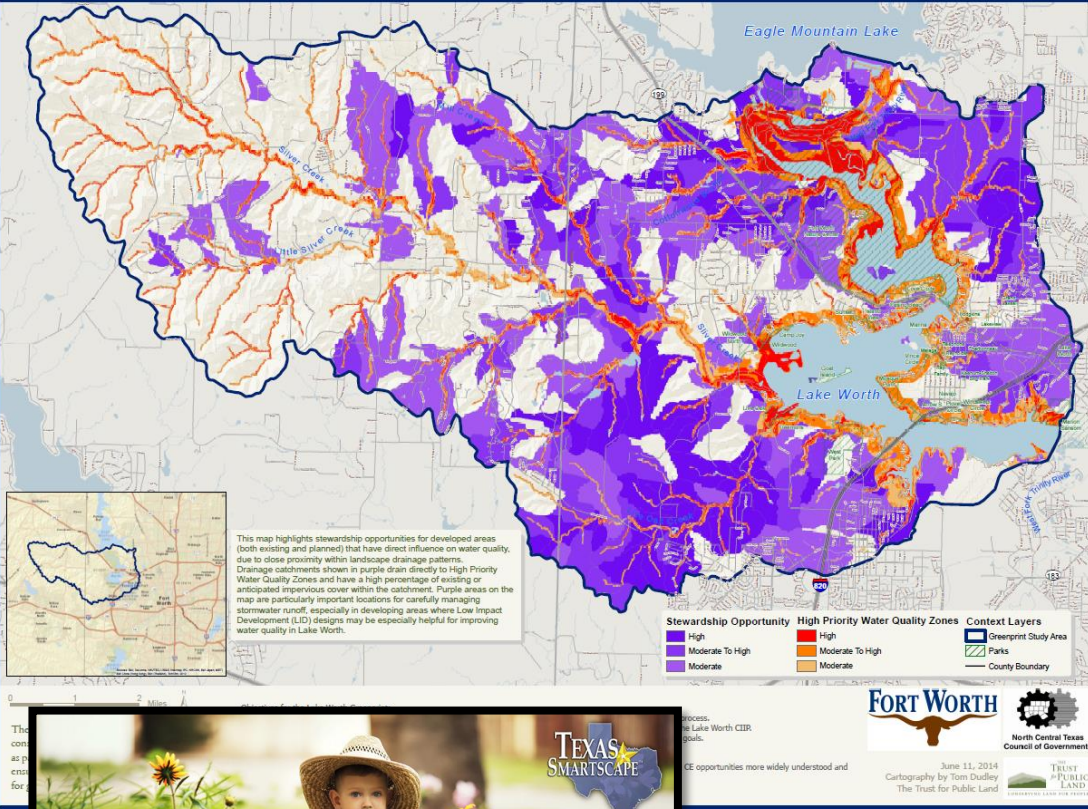


Environment & Development Department Program Update

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Environment & Development Programs

Lake Worth Greenprint - Stewardship Opportunities for Existing and Future Development



Open Space Conservation:

- Greenprinting
- Green Infrastructure Planning

Water Quality/Watershed Management:

- Water Quality Management Planning; Pollution Prevention; Stormwater Programs; Watershed Protection Plans
- Water Efficiency/Conservation

Sustainable Infrastructure Initiatives:

- Public Works (integrated Storm Water Management (iSWM); Sustainable Public Rights of Way (SPROW))



Mitigation and Enhancement Concepts



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Mitigation and Enhancement Strategies



Potential Impacts and Regional Mitigation Strategies

Reference Handout 3

Resource Categories:

- Neighborhoods and Communities
- Wetlands and Water Resources
- Natural Areas
- Threatened and Endangered Species
- Air Quality

Future Opportunities for Coordination

A scenic landscape photograph showing a large body of water, likely a reservoir or lake, in the middle ground. The foreground is dominated by lush green trees and bushes. In the background, there's a flat horizon line with some distant buildings and a sky filled with soft, white clouds. The overall color palette is dominated by greens and blues, with a slightly hazy or overcast atmosphere.

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Ideas for Future Webinars or Trainings

- REF Interactive Website Demonstration
- Resource Agency Priorities
- Interagency Review Team (IRT) Coordination

Contact Information by Topic

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