

Strategic Plan for 1999-2003

Adopted on November 18, 1999

North Central Texas Council of Governments

This strategic plan culminates a year-long process of posing questions and seeking answers about the future of North Central Texas as it enters the next millennium. In January 1999, NCTCOG's Executive Board initiated the strategic planning process by establishing seven "blue-ribbon" task forces. They assisted the Board by looking at the region futuristically and considering what NCTCOG needs to offer in the way of services and programs through the year 2003 if it is to assist in strengthening the region it serves.

In his opening remarks to the Executive Board, Mike Eastland, NCTCOG's Executive Director noted that –

"Political scientists, economists and urbanologists are convinced that future economic, social and environmental gains will be achieved on a regional basis rather than at the local, state or national level. Regions of the world will be in competition with each other for economic development opportunities."

"As the 21st Century begins to dawn, it is imperative that the North Central Texas Region does everything possible to assure that it sustains and even improves its relative competitive assets, advantages and quality of life. NCTCOG is embarking upon a strategic planning effort to assist its membership, partners and the region as a whole, to be in the strongest possible position to sustain and improve its economic, social and environmental assets and infrastructure."

Each of the seven task forces reviewed NCTCOG's current programs; considered whether programs should be continued, modified, or added; and discussed if NCTCOG needs to facilitate a collaborative approach in selected areas. Examples of questions which the various task forces addressed included –

- What can the region do to promote quality, sustainable development?
- How do transportation planning and funding decisions influence this?
- What must the region (and our member local governments) do to assure an educated and trained workforce?
- What programs are needed to deal with an aging population?
- How can the region best secure a healthy and sustainable environment?
- What efforts are required to maintain a strong and affordable public safety system?

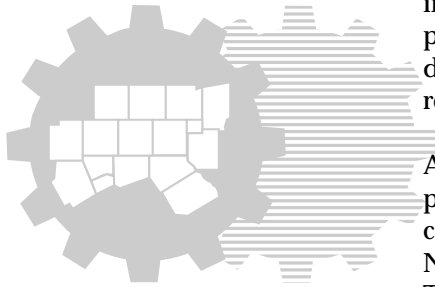
NCTCOG Mission Statement

We are an association of, by and for local governments.
We assist our members in planning for common needs,
cooperating for mutual benefit, and
recognizing regional opportunities
for improving the quality of life in North Central Texas.

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Three-Step Strategic Planning Process



There are many ways to undertake a strategic planning process. Many books and articles have been written on the subject. Because NCTCOG is a membership organization of more than 230 local governments across a diverse 16-county region, it was very important that the strategic planning process reflect its members' hopes and desires not only for the agency, but the region as well.

A simple three-step strategic planning process was proposed, with each step culminating in a presentation to NCTCOG's Executive Board. The results are summarized in this document.

Step 1. Agreed Upon a Strategic Planning Process

At its January 1999 meeting, NCTCOG's Executive Board approved the strategic planning process. Key decisions included:

- The planning period of 1999 to 2003 was chosen to match that of the state agencies.
- Seven strategic planning task forces were appointed to provide direct involvement by member local governments and other stakeholders.
- A comprehensive "S.W.O.T." analysis would be undertaken to assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- NCTCOG's existing advisory committees would be involved throughout.
- Regional forums and focus groups would be used to solicit input and feedback on the strategic issues.
- Key measures would be identified to track implementation of the recommendations (now called "indicators of success").

Step 2. Prepared S.W.O.T. Analysis

As a first step, each of the task forces addressed the following four questions, often referred to as a S.W.O.T. analysis derived from the first letter of each element –

- What major internal strengths should NCTCOG build upon?
- What major internal weaknesses must be overcome?
- What major external opportunities are or will be present?
- What major external threats are or will be present?

Many NCTCOG advisory committees and the NCTCOG staff also participated. The results were presented in a consolidated S.W.O.T. analysis to the Executive Board in May 1999.

The S.W.O.T. analysis identified many agency strengths, including experienced staff, member government support, strong committee input, inter-jurisdictional problem solving, and use of cutting-edge technology. Weaknesses reflected staff retention, funding uncertainties, struggles for consensus, and lack of public awareness of NCTCOG programs and services.

Many opportunities were suggested, such as more partnerships and cooperative programs, expanded outreach, and new funding. External threats included unfunded mandates and regulatory demands, complexity of the region, and competition for the same customer.

As might be expected, several S.W.O.T. analysis elements worked together. For example, an agency strength of knowledgeable staff was challenged by the threat of work overload and competition for qualified staff in a very competitive job market.

Step 3. Identified Strategic Issues

Strategic issues emerged readily from the S.W.O.T. analysis. They build on the agency's strengths and take advantage of opportunities, while overcoming weaknesses and threats.

The task forces considered the following questions:

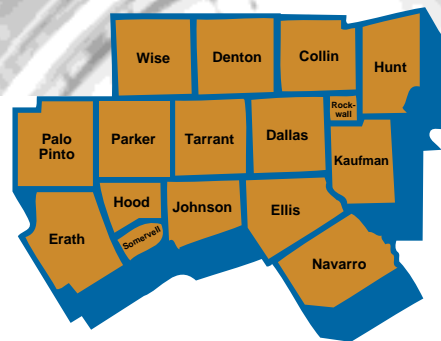
- What programs and services now being performed should continue?
- What current programs or services should be modified?
- * What new programs or services should be added?
- Are there programs or services that should be advocated if not performed?

Each of the task forces identified the key strategic issues in its area of interest. Various focus groups, regional forums and public meetings were conducted to seek feedback. Four strategic issues common to several departments or the entire agency were also identified. At its August 1999 workshop, the Executive Board was briefed on each set of issues by the Chair or a representative from each task force.

Thirty-nine strategic issues resulted from this process. Each strategic issue is presented in a similar format –

- **Issue** – succinct statement of the issue
- **Vision of Success** – where NCTCOG wants to be in a positive, visionary light

- **Steps to Success** – a list of steps that can be undertaken from 1999-2003 that can lead to success
- **Indicators of Success** – specific indicator(s) of success that can be used to track progress



S.W.O.T. Results			
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledgeable and experienced staff • Agency support • Committee input • Regional cooperation • Member government support • Technology and infrastructure • Comprehensive services • Central location • Program-specific strengths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited resources • Staff retention/overload • Funding uncertainties • Lack of public awareness • Struggling for consensus • Program-specific weaknesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore new funding • Expand outreach and communication • Develop partnership and cooperative programs • Provide high-tech leadership • Offer expanded development services • Identify new services/programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding cuts • Unfunded mandates and regulatory demands • Competition for same customer/ changing needs • Complexity of region • Competition for qualified staff • Legislative actions/inaction

Common Strategic Issues



Emerging from the strategic planning process were four issues that have agencywide applicability: member outreach and communication, integrated regional planning, regulatory requirements, and cooperative programs.

NCTCOG serves a diverse 16-county region of North Central Texas which is centered around the two urban centers of Dallas and Fort Worth. Currently, NCTCOG has 233 member governments including all 16 counties, 163 cities, 26 school districts, and 28 special districts.

Even though committee input and member government support were “strengths” identified in the S.W.O.T. analysis, the need for expanded outreach and communication with NCTCOG’s own members and the public was noted as an “opportunity.”

NCTCOG derives its authorities from state enabling legislation and the Texas Government Code Section 391. This code states that the purpose of Councils of Governments is to "... make studies and plans to guide the unified, far-reaching development of a region, eliminate duplication, and promote economy and efficiency in the coordinated development of a region." To qualify for state financial assistance, a COG must among other activities "... be engaged in a comprehensive development planning process" that meets six specific requirements.

In its assessment of COG's statewide, the State Auditor suggested that the various regional plans of a COG be better integrated. Several of the strategic planning task forces supported this recommendation, and an integrated plan for transportation, environment and development (TED) will be prepared consistent with the timeframe for development of future transportation plans.

Regulatory demands and unfunded mandates were among the "threats" identified in the S.W.O.T. analysis. These ranged from potential air quality sanctions in transportation to federal rules which inhibit program success in workforce development. It was suggested that NCTCOG develop a more proactive approach to regulatory issues.

Many opportunities for new services and programs were suggested: distance education, market development for "gold collar" jobs, enhanced mobility through Intelligent Transportation Systems, and incentives for sustainable development. NCTCOG must and will maintain its ability to quickly respond to the changing world and the expanding needs of its members through cooperative programs.

Highlights for Technology Innovation – a common theme throughout the strategic plan is the application of state-of-the-art technology, including:

- *Extended use of the internet, conference calls and video teleconferencing*
- *Distance education for training and workforce development*
- *Regional geographic information systems, high-speed broadband networking, and electronic data exchange*
- *Allocation of new radio communications frequencies*
- *Operational capabilities in emergency response, Intelligent Transportation System, and traffic management systems*

MEMBER OUTREACH & COMMUNICATION

• ISSUE

– *The SWOT identifies opportunities for expanded outreach and communication with NCTCOG's membership. Potential threats of competing services and local funding limitations could cause a loss of member involvement.*

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– Local elected officials and senior staff from all member local governments see NCTCOG as "we" not "they", and have opportunities for an active and meaningful role in its purposes and activities.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– NCTCOG expands member involvement through:
 a) "welcoming" new elected officials and senior staff with information on NCTCOG services and a visit; b) more participation by school districts; c) at least annual round tables inviting all staff in each function, i.e. public works; d) extended use of innovative techniques such as the Internet, conference calls and video teleconferencing for communications and feedback with all members; e) appropriate structure, focus and representation on NCTCOG committees; f) more direct education of governing bodies of member governments and state and federal agencies.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Positive comments by members through periodic surveys; continued membership in NCTCOG; number of feedback responses to web-based questionnaires.



INTEGRATED REGIONAL PLANNING

• ISSUE

– NCTCOG is required to be engaged in a "comprehensive development planning process" as mandated in its enabling legislation. The State Auditor has made specific recommendations for improvement, while the SWOT has recognized NCTCOG's role in regional cooperation and comprehensive services. Challenging regional issues such as air quality require integration across traditional functions.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– An integrated plan for transportation, environment and development (TED) that fully meets the requirements for a "comprehensive development planning process", without altering NCTCOG's existing mission and purposes.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– NCTCOG develops an integrated plan by:

- forming an interdepartmental leadership team and policy coordination structure;
- preparing a working outline consistent with the transportation plan preparation timeframe;
- utilizing consistent demographic forecasts;
- assuring the widest possible participation of its membership and key committees;
- preparing specific, yet integrated plan elements for transportation, etc.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Adoption of the integrated plan by NCTCOG's Executive Board, Regional Transportation Council and state/federal agencies as appropriate.

During the S.W.O.T. analysis process, several "weaknesses" were identified which relate to the internal operations of the agency as opposed to member services. The task forces suggested that they would more appropriately be addressed by agency management. These include competitive staff salaries and retention, job promotion opportunities, and staff professional development training. Increased attention is already being placed on these important elements.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

• ISSUE

– Federal and State regulations, as identified in the SWOT, represent both threats and opportunities to the region and NCTCOG.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– NCTCOG develops and implements a "Proactive Regulatory Action Policy" to approach new and existing regulatory issues.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– First, NCTCOG develops a Proactive Regulatory Action Policy which establishes the ground rules and framework for action. Then, NCTCOG:

- identifies new and coming regulations impacting the region;
- seeks member consensus on key regulatory issues;
- initiates partnerships and alliances to provide input during the development of state and federal regulations;
- advocates the role of local government in regulatory affairs;
- offers its services to help local governments to address emerging regulations.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Member governments have input on developing regulations; regional strategies are formed to deal with federal or state regulations; NCTCOG increases role in consensus building and information exchange while resisting any role as regional enforcer.

COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS

• ISSUE

– NCTCOG's enabling legislation encourages and permits local governments "to join and cooperate to improve the health, safety, and general welfare of their residents." The SWOT recognizes this as a NCTCOG strength and suggests expanded activities.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– Local governments are cooperating for mutual benefit.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– NCTCOG seeks expanded opportunities for cooperative programs in each main program area by:

- annually developing a priority list of needs through committee and member involvement;
- distributing specific "proposals" to members and prospective partners for cost-sharing interest;
- tracking grant announcements targeted for cooperative local government efforts.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– The number of successfully implemented cooperative programs.

Human Services and Regional Training



The Department of Human Services and Regional Training has program responsibilities for the North Central Texas Area Agency on Aging; Regional 9-1-1 Emergency Number Systems; Criminal Justice Planning and Funds Allocation; Regional Training, both law enforcement and non-law enforcement; Auto Theft Prevention; and Public Safety Radio Communications.

The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) provides an accessible, locally-based, coordinated system of services to the elderly throughout the 14 counties surrounding Dallas and Tarrant Counties. The program's mission is to help older Texans achieve healthy and productive lives within a safe and comfortable living environment. This is accomplished in part by providing directly and through community-based organizations home-delivered and congregate meals, transportation, nursing home ombudsman services, case management, benefits counseling, and homemaker services. Because

of its long history of providing access to services, the AAA may be positioned to examine service referral and assistance to older and younger persons with disabilities.

9-1-1 Emergency Number Planning and systems maintenance allows for systems upgrades through the timely replacement of 9-1-1 equipment, rural addressing, public education and information, training of Public Safety Answering Point personnel, and planning for required network and wireless location solutions. Future challenges include systems integration of location determination solutions which will pinpoint the locations of wireless callers.

The Criminal Justice program provides technical assistance to existing and potential grantees seeking grants for federal and state funds. Local governments, independent school districts, and non-profit agencies apply for the funds to implement new programs or strengthen existing ones. Approximately \$20 million will be allocated to more than 100 agencies annually.

Law Enforcement Training through the Regional Police Academy provides basic and advanced peace officer training to local law enforcement officers, corrections personnel, and telecommunicators. Operational since 1968, the Academy has trained more than 4,500 rookie officers and nearly 51,000 veteran officers. Future challenges include developing web-based courses for veteran officers, and enhancing existing courses through simulator training.

Automobile Theft Prevention (Reduce Auto Theft in Texas) is a statewide program funded by the Texas Automobile Theft Prevention Authority. It encourages a cooperative, coordinated effort to spread the message of how to protect vehicles from being stolen.

Program staff make anti-theft presentations to the general public and public safety agencies across the state.

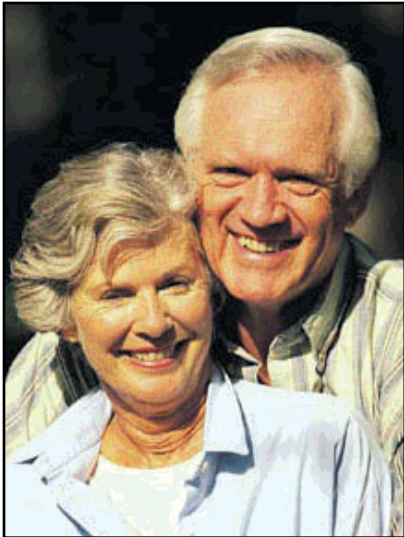
Public Safety Radio

Communications coordinates the allocation of 821MHz frequencies to local public safety agencies. It serves 42 counties across the North Central Texas, East Texas, and Northeast Texas regions. Plan development commenced in 1987; since then many public safety agencies have received needed frequencies to relieve interference and congestion problems, particularly in the metropolitan area of North Central Texas. The Region 40 Committee provides coordination services in conjunction with the state frequency coordinator's office and the Federal Communications Commission.

Local Government Training offers programs to meet the specific training needs of member governments. Through the regional training center, as well as on-site, local government personnel are able to receive quality, cost effective courses in planning and zoning, animal control, public works, supervision and management, water/wastewater and finance, to name a few.

Each of these programs will face many challenges during the next several years. Particularly as the older elderly population continues to increase, the question of community "preparedness" will emerge. Victim services for those involved in criminal and juvenile justice matters, funding deficiencies for existing programs, expanding volunteer bases to enhance public education efforts, implementing distance education for training purposes, and meeting federal and state mandates for wireless location determination are issues which will demand imaginative solutions if member governments and partners are to receive optimum services.

Aging and Disabilities



Throughout its 25 years of operation, the North Central Texas Area Agency on Aging has contracted with community-based organizations to provide needed services to persons 60 years of age or older. Also, the Agency now provides the direct services of case management, long-term care ombudsman services, benefits counseling, and information and referral. The program has experienced staff both within the Agency and throughout the community-based organizations with which it contracts. Although there have been occasions when funding legislation has not passed on a timely basis, eventual funding through the Older Americans Act has provided opportunities for the elderly to receive needed services.

Opportunities for additional funding through the private sector and foundations are present. A statewide initiative may expand the Agency's role in providing access and assistance services to clients of all ages with long-term care needs.

The following five issues, when addressed, should facilitate improved services to the elderly and better access to services for younger persons with disabilities.

EXPAND SERVICES TO YOUNGER PERSONS

• ISSUE

– Possible expansion of Agency's client population, to include younger persons with developmental and other disabilities.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– Agency provision of quality, comprehensive access and assistance services for older persons and younger persons with developmental and other disabilities.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– Secure adequate resources to ensure appropriate staffing and training levels; increase staff knowledge of assessing the needs of persons with developmental disabilities; increase staff knowledge of community resources to assist persons with developmental and other disabilities; establish and/or strengthen partnerships with agencies that serve persons with developmental and other disabilities.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Effective Agency integration of aging and disability services; expanded service options and/or easier access to services for persons with developmental and other disabilities; positive client and partnership-agency feedback.

SERVICES TO THE ELDERLY HAVE NOT KEPT PACE WITH NEEDS

• ISSUE

– Agency-funded services to the elderly have remained fairly static for many years, despite changing client needs.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– Coordinated, comprehensive network of social services that addresses older persons' most critical needs and makes most efficient use of available funds.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– At least annually, conduct regional and county-specific needs assessments to determine gaps in services; determine ability of local agencies to address documented gaps in services; assess Agency capability to provide most needed services not reasonably available through other sources; on a biannual basis, reconfigure services as necessary to respond to client needs; seek supplemental funding to increase service volumes and/or fund new services.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Direct positive relationship between areas of greatest client need and Agency funding levels; greater client ability to access necessary services; positive client feedback.



RESOURCES FOR OMBUDSMAN SERVICES

• ISSUE

– Resources are insufficient to meet full demand for ombudsman and benefits counseling services.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

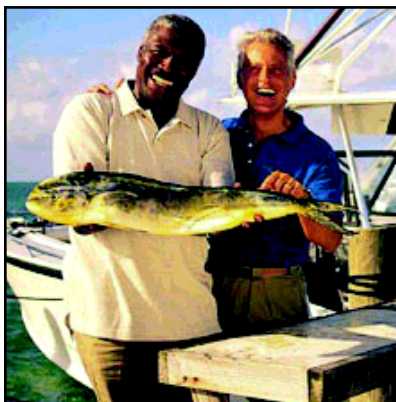
– Additional well-trained and qualified volunteer ombudsman and benefits counselors will provide needed services to the elderly.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– Increase volunteer recruitment by focusing on faith-based and civic organizations as potential sources of volunteer support; provide volunteers on-going training opportunities and technical assistance; provide volunteers formal recognition.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Increase in number of volunteers serving in ombudsman and benefit counseling programs; increase in number of resident/client contacts through ombudsman and benefits counseling programs; decrease in administrative cost of ombudsman and benefits counseling programs.



VISIBILITY OF AGING SERVICES

• ISSUE

– Limited Agency visibility among potential clients.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– Client and/or caregiver recognition of Agency as central clearinghouse of aging and disability service information

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– More widely disseminate Agency brochures and posters; more frequently distribute news releases and public service announcements to local media; sponsor/participate in local coalitions of service providers to encourage more frequent and appropriate agency referrals; sponsor/participate in local information fairs; regularly update Agency web page.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Increased client utilization of information and referral services; increased client identification of the Agency as a source of information on aging and disability services; positive client feedback.

TARGET MINORITY ELDERLY

• ISSUE

– Mandate under the Older Americans Act to target minority elderly.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– Agency services that are fully accessible to and appropriately utilized by older persons of color.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– Gather both quantitative and qualitative data to determine barriers to participation among different racial groups; more widely promote Agency services within churches and civic organizations that serve significant numbers of minority elderly; ensure that Agency staff and subcontractor staff are sensitive to the needs of minority elderly persons.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Client demographics that are consistent with the region's demographics, with minority groups at least proportionately represented.

Public Safety



Five public safety related programs were addressed by the Public Safety Strategic Plan Task Force: Law Enforcement Training, 9-1-1 Administration, Criminal Justice, Radio Communications, and Auto Theft Prevention. With the exception of Auto Theft Prevention, all other programs have an operational history spanning at least 12 years; Auto Theft Prevention is approaching its sixth year. This history of longevity is seen as a strength in that positive relationships have developed between the programs, the local governments they serve, and the state agencies which fund them, wholly or in part.

Another strength from which new initiatives may emerge is NCTCOG's present information services infrastructure. It is from this existing program that distance education and satellite conferencing may enhance the present law enforcement training

program, 9-1-1 telecommunicator training, criminal justice grantee orientation, and auto theft prevention presentations.

NCTCOG's long history of facilitation and coordination will strengthen 9-1-1's ability to assist local 9-1-1 districts and home-rule cities in achieving the goals of location determination for both network and wireless emergency calls.

Partnering with local governments, volunteers, private sector entities, and state agencies to reach a greater audience will help Auto Theft Prevention take its message across the state.

As the Federal Communications Commission releases new radio spectrum for public safety's use, NCTCOG's present experience in helping allocate spectrum will help position the program for the planning and allocation of this new spectrum.

The following seven issues are important to continuing, enhancing, or initiating services which will benefit local public safety agencies.



ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING

- **ISSUE**
– *Identification of alternative funding sources.*
- **VISION OF SUCCESS**
– Continued operation in the event of funding decreases from the Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division.
- **STEPS TO SUCCESS**
– Alternative funding may be accomplished through:
a) identification of private foundations willing to provide endowments or other funding assistance;
b) cooperative agreements with member cities to provide funding;
c) funding agreements with educational institutions.
- **INDICATORS OF SUCCESS**
– Continued operation of the Regional Police Academy; provision of cost-effective training programs to member agencies; continued high quality of instruction; continued satisfaction of local agencies.



Public Safety

LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING FACILITIES

• ISSUE

– *Lack of adequate training facilities for some programs.*

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– Facilities within reasonable distance for driving programs, firearms, and practical application courses are often unavailable.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– Identification of training facilities can be accomplished by:

- a) surveying region to determine existence of adequate facilities;
- b) effecting inter-agency agreements for facility use.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Well-trained law enforcement officers; adequate and safe facilities for driving, firearms and practical application courses; increase in attendance for practical application courses; continued satisfaction by local agencies; increase in revenues.

LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING INSTRUCTORS

• ISSUE

– *The number of quality instructors may be insufficient to meet training needs.*

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– Enough well qualified instructors to allow rotation and preclude burnout.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– Identification of instructors can be accomplished through:

- a) conducting surveys of area agencies to identify qualified instructors in specific areas of expertise;
- b) monitoring presentations during instructor courses to identify prospective instructors;
- c) adjusting fees to provide incentives for successful presenters.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Continued high quality of instruction; favorable critiques from students; increase in revenues; increase in number of participants per course; continued high pass rate for all participants; favorable reviews from NCTCOG's Law Enforcement Training Advisory Committee and the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education.



NETWORK & WIRELESS SOLUTIONS FOR 9-1-1

• ISSUE

– *Wireless solutions to meet Phase I and II FCC requirements and needs of customer have not been developed.*

• VISION OF SUCCESS

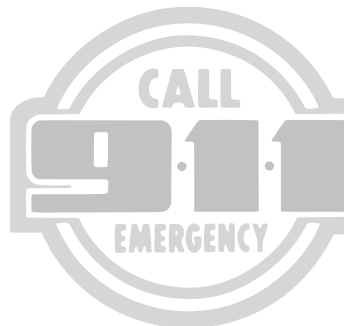
– That wireless customers' telephone numbers and locations can be identified; that cost recovery is fair and effective; that wireless solutions be compatible throughout the region.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– Partner with other service providers, including home-rule jurisdictions, 9-1-1 districts, and telephone companies, to facilitate effective outcomes; develop and implement effective cost recovery methods.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Achievement of all Phase I and II FCC requirements; provision of fair and effective cost recovery; improved response to actual location of cellular customer.





CONTINUED STRONG CRIMINAL JUSTICE PRESENCE

• ISSUE

– Continue to enhance a strong presence throughout the region.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– Increased effectiveness of federal, state, and local funds for program implementation.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– Increase participation among local planning groups; assure a sense of applicant ownership in program planning and implementation; decrease red tape leading to funding; foster strong professional relationships with Criminal Justice Division.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Increased local productivity/service; decreased crime rates; improved inter-agency planning; positive feedback from grantees/applicants; enhanced COG role as facilitator of systems improvements; fewer audit problems for grantees.

ENHANCED RADIO COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITIES

• ISSUE

– Some public safety agencies experience radio communications problems due to interference and congestion.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– The availability of needed radio frequencies for public safety agencies.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– Assist public safety agencies in receiving 700 MHz frequencies by working with the FCC for their immediate release; continue planning for the allocation of 821 MHz spectrum of frequencies; position NCTCOG for a proper role in the allocation of 700 MHz spectrum of frequencies; secure funding for the review of applications and application process; provide strong staff support and leadership to the Region 40 committee; reduce red-tape in allocation process.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Ability of public safety agencies to communicate effectively; allocation of 821 MHz and 700 MHz frequencies; positive feedback on process by local agencies; reduction in use of NCTCOG general revenues to support programs; return and reallocation of "giveback" frequencies.

REDUCED AUTO THEFT RATE

• ISSUE

– Although the rate of auto theft continues to decrease, further reductions are necessary to achieve corresponding decreases in vehicle insurance rates and personal suffering.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– Increased awareness of auto theft prevention evidenced by a corresponding decrease in the rate of vehicle theft throughout Texas.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– Continue to act as the organization for auto theft prevention across the state and region; broaden network of volunteers to carry preventive message; develop strong partnership with private sector; strengthen relationships with auto theft task forces; secure additional funding through private sector; strengthen professional relationships with state funding agency, Texas Automobile Theft Prevention Authority.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Decrease in auto theft rate statewide; increase in staff capability to carry preventive message; increase in other partners' participation, i.e., task forces, insurance companies; receive positive feedback from partners; achieve program goals.

Local Government Training

REGIONAL TRAINING PERSPECTIVE

- **ISSUE**
– Develop a regional perspective for Local Government Training.
- **VISION OF SUCCESS**
– Customer participation should increase by 25% each year.
- **STEPS TO SUCCESS**
– Increased participation will be facilitated by:
a) conducting customer surveys,
b) developing needed certification programs,
c) encouraging satellite training, and
d) exploring the private market for additional customers; NCTCOG’s Regional Training Center, in partnership with local governments, will be the lead division to bring about increases in customer participation.
- **INDICATORS OF SUCCESS**
– Increases in the number of customers; revenues that equal or exceed expenses; positive customer satisfaction surveys; reduced number of course cancellations.

EFFECTIVE COST RECOVERY

- **ISSUE**
– Attain break-even program status.
- **VISION OF SUCCESS**
– Revenue should increase by 15% each year for the next five years.
- **STEPS TO SUCCESS**
– An increase in revenues will be facilitated through:
a) conducting customer surveys to assess training needs;
b) monitoring expenditures;
c) reducing instructor costs;
d) improving marketing to customer base;
e) developing the private market as a source of customers.
- **INDICATORS OF SUCCESS**
– Increase in revenues; revenues that equal or exceed expenses; increase in number of participants; reduction in course cancellations; positive customer response.



Local Government Training has been a NCTCOG program since 1983 when the blue ribbon Committee of the Future recommended that member governments’ non-police personnel have the opportunity for quality, cost-effective training. A full range of courses has been offered during the program’s 17 years of operation. Courses are offered at the Regional Training Center, as well as on site within the jurisdiction itself. Although NCTCOG’s central location is often seen as a strength, the Strategic Plan Task Force pointed out, it is often time consuming and therefore expensive, for local agencies to send their personnel all the way to Arlington for training. Satellite facilities,

strategically located throughout North Central Texas, could reduce travel time and provide greater opportunities for increased training participation. The Task Force cited additional issues including: the need for local governments to develop perspectives for Local Government Training, increase the revenue stream and thus, become self-sufficient, and implement additional strategies, such as distance education, that will be more cost-effective, while improving services to participating agencies.

The future of Local Government Training is linked to successfully addressing the five issues shown.



INCREASE NUMBER OF TRAINING COURSES

• ISSUE

– Increase the number of courses held.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– A reduction in the annual number of course cancellations to a rate of 10 -15% with an increase in the number of participants.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– A reduction in the number of course cancellations will be facilitated by:

- surveying customer base to determine current training needs;
- using e-mail and fax to inform customer base of course offerings;
- providing early notification of course offerings;
- improving the quality of instruction for some courses;
- explore use of distance education as a means to expose persons to training opportunities.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Reduction in the number of course cancellations; increase in revenues; increase in attendance; positive customer satisfaction surveys; increase in the number of participants.

REDUCED INSTRUCTOR COSTS

• ISSUE

– *Instructor costs are often too high to achieve "break-even" status.*

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– A reduction of 25% in the annual expenditures for instructors.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– A reduction in instructor costs will be facilitated by:

- negotiating with current instructors;
- identifying new instructors;
- implementing cooperative agreements with member cities to provide instructors.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Reduction in costs for instruction; improvement in quality of instruction; positive student critiques; achievement of "break even" status.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FACILITIES FOR TRAINING

• ISSUE

– *Increased participation through cost-free use of local governments' facilities.*

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– Increase in number of strategically placed facilities for customer convenience.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– The use of cost-free local governments' facilities will be accomplished by:

- identifying major areas of customer concentration;
- identifying conveniently located training facilities;
- executing facilities use agreements.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Increase in enrollments; shorter travel distance for course participants; increase in revenues; positive feedback from customer base.

Workforce Development

WORKFORCE COORDINATION AND INFORMATION

• ISSUE

– Accessible economic, business, and educational information is necessary for continued growth of the regional economy. The establishment of a regional clearinghouse for such information will require integration across traditional functions internally, as well as across the three Workforce Boards, economic development agencies, and educational organizations.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– NCTCOG will serve as a source for economic, business, and educational information and will promote initiatives which support regional cooperation, mobility, and economic growth.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– NCTCOG will develop a regional clearinghouse for such data by: a) collecting, developing and distributing information regarding the economic, demographic, and educational status of the region; b) collecting and publishing labor market information; and c) increasing the collaborative efforts between Workforce Boards, chambers of commerce, economic development corporations and educational institutions.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Adoption of the integrated plan by the Executive Board, the three area Workforce Boards, and other entities as appropriate; resources committed by all partners to sustain the initiative.

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORTED EDUCATION AND TRAINING

• ISSUE

– Job seekers need accessible, affordable, short-term training to enter high-skill, high-wage jobs, an educated and trained workforce is becoming increasingly important for industry to remain economically competitive.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– Employers will have a workforce trained with the knowledge and skills necessary to perform high-skill jobs, provide job seekers with education/training opportunities that are accessible, affordable, high-wage, and directly related to the needs of area industry.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– NCTCOG will form coalitions of employers and coalitions of education/training providers to address the training needs of area industry, coordinate efforts for a distance-education facility, establish distance-education sites in low-income, rural, and special needs areas, promote education and training for high-demand occupations, promote education/training opportunities for high-demand occupations.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– The implementation of employer coalition and education/training provider coalition recommendations, the establishment of a distance-education facility, positive customer satisfaction surveys.

The North Central Texas economy is one of the largest and fastest growing in the country. The region's dynamic economy has been driven by two important factors: jobs and people. The diverse economy has created an abundance of available jobs, which in turn has contributed to significant increases in the population. An unprecedented number of job seekers are drawn to the region because of the vigorous economy; yet, many jobs go unfilled. The Workforce Development Strategic Plan for NCTCOG seeks to address the gap between the labor demand needs of employers and the availability of a skilled workforce to meet those needs. It is critical that there be an efficient, coordinated system matching jobs to qualified job seekers. One of the principal

purposes of NCTCOG is to provide regional resource planning and information for the 16-county area. This unique responsibility positions NCTCOG at the forefront to effectively coordinate various workforce-partnering activities for the region.

Job growth has been unsurpassed over the last several years, reaching its peak in 1997 when there were over 100,000 new employment openings. Although 1998 saw a reduction, the overall employment market has remained strong as indicated by an unemployment rate of only 3.3 percent in 1998. Monthly reports continue to indicate that unemployment has remained low well into 1999.



Likewise, since 1990 the North Central Texas population has increased by an average of 90,000 new residents every year. In 1998, the increase in population reached a ten-year high with 136,847 new residents being added to the local economy.

North Central Texas Economy

A strong, diverse economy, busy airports and thriving cultural and leisure resources make North Central Texas one of the nation's most

desirable areas in which to live and work. The 16-county region is adding nearly 400 new residents per day, an influx that propelled the region past the "5 million" population mark in mid 1998--nearly a 14 percent change from 1990.

Additionally, job growth throughout the past decade, has led the North Central Texas economy to considerable growth, showing a robust employment increase of 102,987 jobs for a total of 2,703,549 jobs in 1998.

Employment opportunities are concentrated in the manufacturing, and services sectors, which represents more than two-thirds of the region's total employment. Telecommunications and high-technology industries dominate the manufacturing sector. Local analysts project that in the next ten years, service, wholesale/retail trade, government and transportation industries will account for 89 percent of the region's jobs.

North Central Texas Partnerships

The healthy economy is the result of ample and growing resources. Similarly, the entities responsible for the coordination of these economic forces are just as abundant and strong. The region includes over 90 chambers of commerce, 130 independent school districts, 40+ college and university campuses, 3 federally-funded workforce development boards and numerous economic development agencies, trade associations, career schools, and businesses.

All of these entities are working to increase the applicant pool of educated and skilled workers to fill the many high-skill, high-wage jobs. Representatives of these entities participated in the strategic planning process and identified three key responsibilities NCTCOG should assume which would assist the current market-driven forces in matching people to jobs more efficiently.

First, for continued growth, the region requires better access to economic, business and educational information. NCTCOG should seek opportunities and methods to become the regional clearinghouse for reliable, verifiable and useful economic and demographic data.

Second, the region requires more efficient communication and coordination in order to match the skill needs of employers with the skills taught by the education/training community. Two factors contribute to skill shortages: poorly prepared job seekers, and rapidly changing technology. NCTCOG should facilitate partnerships between employers and the education/training community to support high-skilled occupational education activities for the region. It should take the lead along with education and industry to promote distance education and web-based learning opportunities.

Third, the major step in measuring success is benchmarking the independent efforts of all partners within the region. Towards this end, a regional report on the progress of the workforce development, economic development, and education initiatives should be developed annually. It should be widely distributed and should focus on successful models that work.

The North Central Texas area provides a challenging environment for workforce development initiatives. By focusing on the coordination and distribution of information, supporting the development of cutting-edge occupational curriculum, and ensuring the sustainability of the systems that work, the North Central Texas Council of Governments will play a vital role in ensuring the future of the region.

WORKFORCE SUSTAINABILITY AND INNOVATION

- **ISSUE**
– *Developing a regional report on the progress of workforce development, economic development, and education is necessary to determine what is working and what is not working.*
- **VISION OF SUCCESS**
– Sustain local and regional initiatives that benefit our communities and create innovative solutions for what is not working. Ensure the quality of life, the strength of the economy, and the viability of the region.
- **STEPS TO SUCCESS**
– NCTCOG will develop a regional evaluation system that:
a) tracks progress made in workforce development, with the economy, and with education;
b) provides an annual report of regional indicators;
c) identifies the most useful and beneficial plans, services, and products, etc.
- **INDICATORS OF SUCCESS**
– Use of information obtained through the evaluation system by the three area Workforce Boards, economic development agencies, education, employers, and other entities as appropriate; continuous improvement in each area.

Regional Information Infrastructure



The rapid advances in information technology are providing more opportunities for local governments to share knowledge and information, communicate planning activities with the public, and reduce the overall cost of providing services by eliminating duplication. The Information Infrastructure Task Force identified three major issues for inclusion in the Strategic Plan: Technology Leadership, Regional Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and Local Demographic Information.

NCTCOG provides an array of programs and services beneficial for member governments that require technical innovation. Examples of these programs include GIS, high-speed broadband networking, emergency-response systems, and traffic management systems. To provide these services, the Agency has invested in leading edge technology.

The Task Force recommended that NCTCOG operate a technology clearinghouse to share innovative ideas and provide service to local jurisdictions. NCTCOG will develop a business plan that will build a framework of roundtables, workshops, training, and consulting services to enable local jurisdictions to reduce costs and share technology investments.

Area local, state, and federal governments have created GIS systems to provide support services and manage program operations. These systems require extensive database development that is often duplicated in other overlapping jurisdictions. As an example, county, city, school districts, tax appraisal districts, and special districts that support 9-1-1 emergency services often use the same base of street and address information to provide service to citizens. By jointly creating standards to create, maintain, and share this data, these governments could pool resources and create a single digital street map to be used by all.

Currently, NCTCOG has an extensive investment in GIS to provide information and mapping services to support regional planning. These investments would be extended to create an integrated layer of information that could be accessed through the Internet. NCTCOG will expand its existing data clearinghouse to allow interactive access to information stored on the network.

To insure consistency in geographic information, a North Central Texas GIS Coordinating Committee will be created to establish standards for maintenance of these layers and for updates. As part of an overall technology program, this will also become part of the high-speed regional government information network.

REGIONAL GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

• ISSUE

– Area local, state, and federal governments have created GIS to provide information resources to support services and program operations. These systems require extensive database development that duplicate overlapping jurisdictions.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– An integrated layer of geographic information accessed through an electronic data interchange (EDI) over the Internet.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– NCTCOG will expand on its Internet data clearinghouse to allow interactive access to information stored on the network. Through the North Central Texas GIS Coordinating Committee, data standards will be established and maintained for maintenance and updates. Formal public/private partnerships for maintenance of shared data layers will be created.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– The adoption of the GIS EDI as the cooperative framework for geographic information among jurisdictions in North Central Texas is a main goal. A Regional Geographic Information Council will be instituted to oversee operations.



NCTCOG prepares long-term demographic forecasts and local estimates for use in regional infrastructure planning. Although useful to local jurisdictions, this data is not updated or detailed enough to meet the requirements for local planning.

Through the use of the Internet, an interactive demographic forecast process that is sensitive to local development trends will be created. The Agency will also create a locally-endorsed process that can evaluate development impacts at the local/neighborhood level. The existing Demographic Task Force will be given the charge to implement data standards for converting local zoning, land use, and site-based information to a consistent regional format.

Utilizing new available technology, NCTCOG has a tremendous opportunity to serve the region. By encouraging the sharing of information and technology, improving regional planning by including more timely and detailed planning knowledge, local governments will receive a higher return on their regional investments.

TECHNOLOGY LEADERSHIP

• ISSUE

– NCTCOG provides an array of programs and services that require technical innovation that would be beneficial for member governments. Examples of these programs include GIS, high-speed broadband networking, emergency response systems, and traffic management systems. To provide these services, the Agency has invested in leading-edge technology.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– Operate a technology clearinghouse to share information and provide services to local jurisdictions.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– NCTCOG will develop a business plan to build a framework of roundtables, workshops, training, and consulting services to enable local jurisdictions to reduce costs and share technology investments. The goal is to build on current efforts to share services between member governments.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– The creation of a high-speed gigapop network between public organizations within North Central Texas; maintain virtual website to coordinate information and share ideas.

LOCAL DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

• ISSUE

– NCTCOG prepares long-term demographic forecasts and local estimates for use in regional infrastructure planning. Although useful to local jurisdictions, this data often is not timely or meets the detail required for local planning.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– Interactive demographic forecast process that is sensitive to local development trends; locally-endorsed process that can evaluate development impacts at the local/neighborhood level.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– Implement data standards for converting local zoning, land use, and site-based information to a consistent regional format; establish a technical advisory team to evaluate model assumptions and assess results; provide Internet access to the model system.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Locally adopted impact assessments based on regional model; local jurisdictions are providing regular updates on zoning changes, comprehensive plans, and site plans; regional demographic models are updated at more frequent intervals.

Transportation



The Transportation Strategic Planning Task Force was comprised of 20 community policy leaders who were knowledgeable and familiar with the transportation issues facing the region. In addition to the Task Force, comments were also received from the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), Technical Committees, and NCTCOG staff. The Task Force conducted a thorough analysis that included a review of regional, state, and federal strategic plans; a review of NCTCOG previous Committee of the Future findings, and a review of opportunities with other NCTCOG departments and external partners. Most importantly, public comments were sought at three public meetings.

As a result of this in-depth analysis, the Transportation Strategic Planning Task Force recommended seven policy initiatives: MPO Designation and Representation, Transportation Mobility and Reliability, Transportation Funding, Air Quality Planning and Legislative Initiatives, Transportation Accessibility, Communication with the Public, and Transportation Monitoring Program. Six of these initiatives are highlighted here. Specific information on the Air Quality Planning initiative may be found in the Development and Environmental Services section of this document.

Consistent with section 134 of title 23 of the United States Code, the primary functions of the Regional

Transportation Council are to provide guidance for multimodal transportation planning and to assure coordination among transportation modes, local government entities, and planning activities. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the institutional structure must be monitored and adjusted to make sure fair and appropriate representation of the local governments and agencies is provided to gain the necessary support for regional transportation decisions.

One of the greatest challenges facing the region is the increasing levels of congestion and reliability of the transportation system. Commuters and travelers must be able to trust the system for consistent travel times. Innovative actions to reduce congestion and enhance mobility are recommended: 1) the advancement of regional rail; 2) integration of high occupancy vehicle lanes with toll roads, enabling a reduction in capital costs and capture of revenue for the transportation system; 3) use of technology in an intelligent transportation system to reduce delay and emissions (50 percent of motorist delays are due to incidents or accidents on transportation facilities); 4) discouragement of single occupant travel; 5) increased information signage to minimize circuitry, missed exits, and wrong lane assignments; 6) thoroughfare access control; and 7) sustainable development initiatives. In addition, the Regional Transportation Council is also looking at a mediation process where the RTC would intervene in particular issues when regionally significant projects may not receive a consensus and try to develop a mediated solution to move the projects forward.

Needed improvements to the regional transportation system do not come without a price tag. Initial estimates to implement *Mobility 2025: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan* identify a 25 percent revenue deficit (in 1999\$). Partnerships among



Photo courtesy of DART

federal, state, and local governments; between roadway and transit agencies; and between the public and the private sectors are going to be even more important in the future as we try to maximize funding. The RTC's priority in our transportation system is to maintain the existing infrastructure before building new facilities (about 40-50 cents of every dollar is used to maintain the current infrastructure). Without increased revenue, needed transportation improvements would not occur.

A major focus in this Strategic Plan is to provide access to transportation services for the elderly, disabled, low-income, transit dependent, and unemployed citizens of the region.

Increased awareness, education, and interest by the general public about the impacts of congestion are critical.

MPO DESIGNATION AND REPRESENTATION

• ISSUE

– *Regional Transportation Council (RTC) Boundary and Representation.*

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– To continue success of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) by maintaining the appropriate boundary and committee member representation.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

- Consistent with the Year 2000 Census, review:
 - a) the current MPO boundaries for the Dallas-Fort Worth, Denton and Lewisville Urbanized Areas and establish larger Dallas-Fort Worth MPO boundary (if necessary) and maintain commitment to Denton and Lewisville;
 - b) the boundaries for the second Call for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program and Surface Transportation Program—Metropolitan Mobility projects;
 - c) the eight-hour ozone standard for MPO boundary changes;
 - d) appropriate size for the RTC, number of RTC members by city, and RTC representation by cluster cities and counties; and
 - e) role of Wise County in Metropolitan Planning Organization.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Provision to all eligible entities a voice in the transportation planning process within a manageable committee structure to maintain high standards in federal certification.

TRANSPORTATION MOBILITY AND RELIABILITY

• ISSUE

– *Excessive congestion leading to unreliable surface transportation performance.*

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– To reduce congestion and enhance reliability of surface transportation system.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– Through development of Mobility 2025, enhance mobility through innovative actions where necessary, such as regional rail, "managed" roadway facilities (i.e., HOV/toll and express facilities), Intelligent Transportation System, travel demand management, information signage, thoroughfare access control, and sustainable development strategies. Policies regarding project mediation, project development streamlining, funding equity, and prioritization of Unified Planning Work Program projects will be established by the Regional Transportation Council. The RTC will also establish and monitor a mobility and reliability index.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Improvement in system reliability through reduced congestion, improved travel times, and reduced costs to commuters.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

• ISSUE

– *Inadequate funding for transportation improvements.*

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– To maximize funding from local, regional, state and federal sources.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

- Develop an enhanced legislative strategy by:
 - a) reviewing the role and structure of "Partners In Mobility" and recommending improvements, if necessary;
 - b) reviewing the outcome of recent federal and State legislative sessions and recommending improvements in programs;
 - c) establishing a legislative subcommittee of the Regional Transportation Council;
 - d) expanding communities in the transportation authorities;
 - e) continuing priority for maintenance of existing infrastructure; and
 - f) communicating needs to other groups such as the Texas Municipal League and the private sector.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Increased revenue for the implementation of transportation improvements.

Transportation

TRANSPORTATION ACCESSIBILITY

• ISSUE

- Enhanced transportation opportunities for low-income, transit dependent, unemployed, elderly (growing population), and disabled citizens.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

- To guarantee transportation opportunities for all citizens.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

- Continue to identify opportunities to:
 - a) enhance mobility options including legislative actions (e.g., Transit Fairness Act) and funding programs (e.g., Access to Jobs) and
 - b) coordinate services.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- Accessible transportation services for all area citizens.



Without the public's understanding and support for innovative strategies, action programs, and legislative initiatives, the quality of life objectives for the citizens of the region will not be achieved.

Finally, once a year, a "state of the region" performance report of the transportation system will be issued. This report will highlight annual safety data; capacity of the air carrier airports; population, employment, and vehicle miles of travel growth; and results of citizen surveys seeking opinions about the transportation system. Latest innovations in technology and NCTCOG quality of life, mobility, reliability, and air quality indices will also be monitored.

Continuing the economic, social, environmental, and mobility successes that this region has attained will require participation and a unified effort from all the region's citizens.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC

• ISSUE

- Lack of public education and awareness with regard to the effects and implications of congestion.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

- To educate/inform the public about the impacts of congestion, including air quality, safety, travel delay implications, and funding needs.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

- Continue to conduct public meetings on programs, meet with media representatives prior to public meetings, develop videos for general use and broadcast on public access television, and seek consultant marketing assistance (if necessary).

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- Increased awareness and interest by the general public as displayed by willingness to participate in public outreach efforts and action programs, and support legislative initiatives.

TRANSPORTATION MONITORING PROGRAM

• ISSUE

- Lack of annual transportation performance reporting.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

- To annually report the performance of the transportation system to the Regional Transportation Council, the NCTCOG Executive Board, other public officials and the public.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

- Develop an Annual Report that monitors:
 - a) safety performance data for region;
 - b) aviation capacity at air carrier airports;
 - c) population, employment and vehicle miles of travel growth;
 - d) NCTCOG quality of life, mobility, reliability, and air quality indices;
 - e) customer satisfaction and citizen surveys;
 - f) innovative transportation technology from research and development to implementation.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- Annual publication in the Regional Mobility Initiatives series of the above transportation performance measures.

Development and Environmental Services

North Central Texas is the largest inland metropolitan region in the country. Most of our five million citizens depend on reservoirs in the upper Trinity and neighboring basins for their water supply. In addition, some communities, particularly in rural areas, use diminishing ground water supplies. Legislative mandates under Senate Bill 1 require the development and submission of regional water supply plans.

The region also faces the challenges of water quality impacts resulting from urban activities, storm water runoff, and the discharge of treated wastewater from a large metropolitan center. The prairie waterways in North Central Texas, including the Trinity River, experience widely variable flow scenarios. These conditions range from critical low flow situations during drought periods, to periodic severe flooding events.

Air quality has become an increasingly important issue as past state efforts to meet the ozone standard have been largely unsuccessful. New strategies have been crafted, and a regional commitment to improved air quality has brought greater attention to how each citizen can do his or her "share for cleaner air", especially on Ozone Action Days.

The need for new public and private construction, and to maintain rapidly aging infrastructure, has never been more important, as the region continues to outpace most areas of the country in housing starts and employment growth. Critical municipal services such as joint wastewater treatment and solid waste management require continued focus. Communities are using phrases such as "smart growth" more and more as they

develop comprehensive plans for the future.

Under its state enabling legislation, a Council of Governments may plan for the development of a region and make recommendations for a wide range of topics, including environmental resources items such as water supply, sanitation facilities, drainage, parks, recreation sites, open spaces, as well as any other items relating to its general purposes. A plan or recommendation of the COG "...may be adopted in whole or in part by the governing body of a participating governmental unit."



NCTCOG also has specific designated responsibilities from state agencies and its member local governments for certain environmental functional areas, including:

- Review and Comment on various projects seeking federal or state funds pursuant to the Texas Review And Comment System (TRACS).

AIR QUALITY

• ISSUE

– Regional ozone levels exceed health standards, and conformity tests in transportation planning and the State Implementation Plan may be unable to meet federal requirements, resulting in limitations on economic development, transportation project implementation and other sanctions, as well as continued negative health effects.

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– Steering Committee, comprised of public and private sector leaders, aimed at supporting Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) responsibilities in meeting federal air quality standards; ensuring continued transportation planning, programming, and project implementation without federal funding sanctions.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

– To assist the TNRCC, the strengthened public/private coalition leads regional efforts to: a) facilitate local and county government participation; b) encourage private sector participation; c) provide input to TNRCC's State Implementation Plan; d) develop regional transportation conformity documents; e) pursue air quality legislative goals at the State and Federal level; f) facilitate air quality information exchange programs and the area emissions reduction credit organization (AERCO); g) address regional preparedness for winter haze and eight-hour ozone standards; h) educate/inform the public of the problem and its role in solutions, including Ozone Action Days.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– NCTCOG: Level of public and private commitment to regional coalition; performance of transportation conformity tests. TNRCC/EPA: EPA action on state plan; TNRCC ability to meet standards. Public: Increased awareness of potential sanctions and support of clean air programs.

Development and Environmental Services

WATER QUALITY

- **ISSUE**
 - At least seven lakes or stream segments do not meet the uses designated by the state, and specific ground waters are stressed.
- **VISION OF SUCCESS**
 - The citizens of the region enjoy clean and healthy water for the full range of designated uses.
- **STEPS TO SUCCESS**
 - As the designated regional water quality planning agency, NCTCOG assists the state through: a) assuring local government involvement in state water quality programs such as the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL), Clean Rivers Program, and drinking water Source Water Protection; b) expanding public education campaign "Our Water - Take It Personally" c) coordinating the regional storm water management program and facilitating cooperative implementation activities; d) promoting industrial treatment, regionalization of wastewater services and elimination of inadequate on-site systems; e) addressing drinking water quality; f) preparing relevant and up-to-date Water Quality Management Plans that reflect the needs and directions of the region.
- **INDICATORS OF SUCCESS**
 - State & local governments: Impacted stream segments de-listed by the state; local and state programs implemented to reduce storm water impacts; increased consumer confidence in drinking water.

WATER SUPPLY

- **ISSUE**
 - Long term water supplies are critical to the growth and viability of future communities.
- **VISION OF SUCCESS**
 - The citizens of the region enjoy abundant water supplies without fear of shortages.
- **STEPS TO SUCCESS**
 - As the multi-functional regional planning agency, NCTCOG assists the state and regional water planning groups (RWPG's) through:
 - a) keeping local governments informed of state water supply and conservation programs;
 - b) participating with local governments in Regional Water Supply Planning;
 - c) participating with local governments in promoting and encouraging reuse and conservation;
 - d) promoting regionally consistent drought contingency plans;
 - e) reviewing and commenting on funding proposals for water supply facilities and infrastructure.
- **INDICATORS OF SUCCESS**
 - Local Governments/RWPG's/State: Number of drought contingency plans in place; absence of summer water shortages; aquifer levels; State approved Regional Water Supply Management Plan.

- Water Quality Management Planning Agency as designated by the Governor and Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission.

NCTCOG has adopted a regional water quality management plan, and develops annual updates for submission to the state and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through its Water Resources Council. At least seven lakes or stream segments do not meet the uses designated by the state, and specific ground waters are stressed.

- Trinity River COMMON VISION program, where NCTCOG serves as the administrative agent and facilitator for nine cities, three counties and two special districts in partnership with the U.S. Army

Corps of Engineers, addressing flood damage reduction, water quality improvement, environmental restoration, recreation and other public priorities.

- Municipal Solid Waste Planning Agency as designated by the Governor and the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission. NCTCOG has adopted a regional solid waste management plan and conducts an active ongoing program addressing all facets of solid waste minimization, reduction, recycling and disposal through its Resource Conservation Council.
- Air Quality Planning Agency for Mobile Sources as designated by the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission. The



region does not currently attain the one-hour or eight-hour ozone standard. NCTCOG assists the state with the development of its State Implementation Plan for ozone, and performs conformity analysis with its long-range regional transportation plan.

- Regional Codes Standardization and Regional Construction Standards as recognized by its member local governments. NCTCOG coordinates local review and adoption of standardized "indoor" regional



codes through its Regional Codes Coordinating Committee, and has developed a set of "out door" Regional Construction Standards through its Public Works Advisory Committee. An innovative DFW *Center of Development Excellence* is being recommended to define, recognize and celebrate "development excellence."

Six strategic issues were identified by the Development and Environmental Services Task Force. Several others of interest are presented in the earlier section on Common Strategic Issues.

SOLID WASTE

• ISSUE

– *Waste disposal seems to be given the first priority by most people rather than minimization, reuse and recycling of discarded materials.*

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– Purchased materials are reused and recycled wherever possible, illegal dumping is reduced, and remaining waste is handled in a safe manner at permitted facilities.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

- As the designated regional planning agency, NCTCOG assists the state through:
 - a) implementation of the adopted Regional Solid Waste Management Plan;
 - b) administration of pass-through grants to local governments to further the purposes of the plan;
 - c) closed landfill inventories and reporting;
 - d) adequate planning for local solid waste needs;
 - e) developing partnerships with the private sector.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– Local governments: Annual percent reduction per capita in disposal of municipal solid waste; annual increase in recycling rate (from annual statewide survey). NCTCOG: biennial reports to the Legislature through Texas Association of Regional Councils.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

• ISSUE

– *Flooding and other watershed issues diminish the overall quality of life throughout North Central Texas.*

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– The Safe, Clean, Natural, Enjoyable and Diverse values of the Trinity River COMMON VISION program have been adopted in watersheds throughout the region.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

- Based on the successful Trinity COMMON VISION program, NCTCOG:
 - a) expands the Trinity River COMMON VISION policy statement into a regionwide vision of multiple objective management by watershed for the next Millennium;
 - b) seeks local government endorsement of the region wide vision statement;
 - c) signs Memorandums of Understanding with federal and state partner agencies;
 - d) promotes "best practices" to reduce flood risks, improve water quality & recreation, offset negative impacts & serve as a community amenity;
 - e) facilitates local implementation of cooperative programs such as the Trinity Trails System network of multi-purpose linear parks & trails.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– NCTCOG/Local governments: Local endorsement of the regionwide vision statement; local implementation of cooperative programs; agreements with partnering agencies; reduced flooding risks.

DEVELOPMENT EXCELLENCE

• ISSUE

– *Conflicting development policies that add cost and confusion - e.g., wider streets for bike lanes or narrower streets to reduce storm water pollution runoff?*

• VISION OF SUCCESS

– Local governments have the tools necessary to guide land development in their communities that meshes with the fabric of the region, promotes economic development, protects natural resources, and provides the highest attainable quality of life for their constituents.

• STEPS TO SUCCESS

- NCTCOG establishes a DFW Center of Development Excellence (CODE) that: a) brings city, county, school district and private sector interests together to define "development excellence"; b) seeks local and multi-jurisdictional case studies of development excellence and makes widely available, including the Internet; c) presents annual awards recognizing development excellence; d) facilitates regional tools such as the Standard Specifications, model construction codes and similar; e) provides support on local comprehensive planning, infrastructure and urban/rural planning issues; f) coordinates Texas Community Development Program.

• INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

– NCTCOG/Local governments: Case studies of development excellence; local governments adopting regional recommendations such as model codes; positive comments by member local governments through periodic surveys; TCDP funding.

Strategic Planning Task Forces

Aging & Disability Issues

Dr. Thomas Fairchild, University of North Texas, Chair
Dr. Betty Adams, Texas Women's University, Vice-Chair
Pat Cheong, United Way of Tarrant County
Drew Dixon, The Arc
Bruce Frankel, Tarrant County MH/MR
Theresa Hocker, Tarrant County Alzheimer's Association
Alvin Johnson, Texas Department of Human Services
Al Lipscomb, City of Dallas
Paula Loftis, Parkland Memorial Hospital
Robert Marx, Texas Rehabilitation Commission
Jan Parker, Harris Hospital Healthy Communities

Public Safety

Dr. Jim Alexander, Texas Womens University, Chair
Tom Shockley, North Richland Hills, Vice-Chair
Bob Bennett, City of Arlington
Jack Gray, Collin County Community College
Joe Hanna, City of Richardson
Beverly Levy, Dallas Court Appointed Special Advocate
Mike Pedigo, Denton County 9-1-1 District
Dr. Valerie Martinez-Ebers, Texas Christian University
Donna Naylor, City of Plano
Dan Scrivner, City of Dallas

Local Government Training

Kay Godbey, City of Burleson, Chair
Bill Keffler, City of Richardson, Vice-Chair
Donna Barron, City of Lewisville
Kathy Cleveland, City of Irving
Kelly Cooper, City of Colleyville
Melani Fragne, City of North Richland Hills
David Gattis, City of Benbrook
Janet Goad, City of Farmers Branch
Luanne Hanford, City of University Park
Barbara LaCocq, City of Wylie
Laura Morrow, City of Allen
Paulette Owens-Holmes, City of Denton
C. Robert Stripling, City of Colleyville
Greg Weaver, City of Duncanville

Workforce Development

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