



**August 2023**

Welcome to Local Motion, a monthly email newsletter from the North Central Texas Council of Governments Transportation Department.

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## **Back to School: Important tips to help students arrive to campus safely**



There are many things to go over in preparation for the new school year. One that should not be overlooked is safety. It is important to take time to review a few rules to ensure safe transportation in school zones for the coming year, whether your student is driven to school or is walking or bicycling to school.

If you drive your child to school:

- Look out for children in school zones.
- Stop for crossing pedestrians.
- Allow a minimum of three feet when passing bicyclists.
- Look out for bicyclists when opening your door while parallel parked.

If your child walks or rides a bike to school:

- Go over the route to school with them multiple times.
- Provide appropriate equipment such as a bike helmet, umbrella, jacket or water bottle.
- Establish good habits such as looking left and right at intersections, making eye contact with drivers before crossing and obeying signals at intersections.

If your teen is driving to school:

- Follow school year-specific rules such as school zones and yielding to the buses.
- Establish a timeline that allows for adequate time to get school without rushing.
- Watch out for walkers and bikers, especially young children who may not be as visible.
- Remember that car crashes account for a large portion of teen injuries and deaths. Be sure to go over car-specific rules with your teen driver such as if they are allowed to transport other passengers.

If your child is taking the bus to school:

- Take time to show your child their bus stop before the first day.
- Teach your child to stand at least 6 feet (2 or 3 big steps) away from the road.
- Remind your child to always cross in front of vehicles, never behind them.

For more tips on how North Texans can share the road, whether they drive, walk or bicycle, visit [www.lookouttexans.org](http://www.lookouttexans.org).

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## North Texas wins federal transportation grants to help advance significant projects



Three significant Dallas-Fort Worth area transportation projects have been awarded federal grants as part of the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity Program. This means half of the projects awarded RAISE grants throughout the state in June are in North Texas.

- A project led by the North Central Texas Council of Governments to modernize East Lancaster Avenue in Fort Worth has secured a \$20 million grant.
- Dallas Area Rapid Transit's Silver Line/Cotton Belt shared-use trail project will be assisted by a \$25 million grant.
- The City of Dallas was awarded \$6.4 million for planning, design and engineering for Five Mile Creek Trail.

The East Lancaster Complete Streets and Transit Technology Project, between Pine Street and Interstate Highway 820 (approximately 6.5 miles). will accommodate several mobility options within its 140-foot right of way. The project will result in a rebuilt corridor that includes features such as high-capacity bus service, bicycle lanes and sidewalks. Landscaping, transit shelters and additional lighting are also planned, as well as broadband internet infrastructure.

The grant awarded to DART, which was supported by NCTCOG, will fund the construction of approximately 5.2 miles of the Cotton Belt trail, adjacent to DART's Silver Line/Cotton Belt project, between Meandering Way in Dallas and Shiloh Road in Plano. The bicycle-pedestrian trail will connect to several rail stations being built along DART's Silver Line commuter rail project, which will provide passenger rail service

from Dallas Fort Worth International Airport to Plano. In addition to offering another option for exercise, the trail will connect users to transit, jobs, education and places of interest throughout the region.

The Five Mile Creek Trail connects communities in the region separated by the Trinity River. It is expected to reduce injuries and fatalities by cutting down on the corridor's vehicle-pedestrian conflicts.

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## NCTCOG applies for pollution reduction grants



Air quality is an ongoing issue in North Texas, where 10 counties are currently in nonattainment for ground-level ozone.

To continue efforts to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gases and other harmful air pollutants, including ozone precursors and particulate matter, NCTCOG has applied for a grant through the Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) program.

The CPRG program has two phases. The first phase, the CPRG Planning Grants, provides funding to develop regional plans to improve air quality.

The second phase, the CPRG Implementation Grants, provides \$4.6 billion in competitive grant funding to implement the regional plan developed in the first phase.

The development of a regional plan under the CPRG Planning Grants is required for the region to be eligible to compete for funding available through the CPRG Implementation Grants.



NCTCOG has applied for Phase One of the CPRG on behalf of the region and will work with local governments, the public and other interested stakeholders to develop a regional plan to improve air quality. Local governments interested in applying for funding in Phase Two of the CPRG are encouraged to participate in the development of the regional plan to improve air quality to ensure projects of interest are included.

To learn more about the CPRG program, attend an upcoming meeting, and stay updated about NCTCOG's efforts visit, [www.publicinput.com/nctcog-cprg](http://www.publicinput.com/nctcog-cprg). NCTCOG plans to host public meetings throughout the region beginning in September and continuing into the fall.

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## By the Numbers

# 12 million

The approximate number of illegally dumped tires known to exist throughout Texas. NCTCOG has committed \$490,000 in air quality funding to use in a regional tire program aimed at reducing the number of abandoned tires in the region.

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## AQI 101: How to keep your lungs safe

The Dallas-Fort Worth area remains in nonattainment for ozone and is working toward meeting the federal government's standards for this pollutant. Prolonged exposure to elevated concentrations of ground level ozone can be unhealthy to people and animals. The Environmental Protection Agency developed the color-coded Air Quality Index as a tool to help people understand daily air quality and what precautions may be recommended.







Following is an explanation of the AQI and how you can stay safe when ozone levels are high.

**Question:** What is the Air Quality Index (AQI)?

**Answer:** The air quality scale was designed by the EPA. It provides a daily indication of how clean or polluted the air is, and what health effects could arise as a result. The AQI for both the region and individual monitors can change hourly based on the rolling eight-hour average pollutant levels.

**Question:** How do I read the AQI?

**Answer:** The EPA assigned colors to indicate how healthy the air is and recommended actions to protect people's health.

Color	Air Quality	Actions to Protect Your Health
	Good	None necessary
	Moderate	Unusually sensitive people should consider limiting prolonged outdoor exertion
	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Active children and adults and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should limit prolonged outdoor exposure
	Unhealthy	Active children and adults and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should avoid prolonged outdoor exertion; everyone else, especially children, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion
	Very Unhealthy	Active children and adults and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should avoid <i>all</i> prolonged outdoor exertion; everyone else, especially children, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion
	Hazardous	The entire population is more likely to be affected

**Question:** How can poor air quality affect my health?

**Answer:** Pollutants can cause inflamed airways, eye irritation and damage the respiratory tract. Continuous exposure to poor air quality can lead to stroke, heart disease, lung cancer and other respiratory conditions. Additionally, people with lung cancer, asthma, respiratory or cardiovascular conditions, as well as older adults and young children will face more adverse health effects.

**Question:** What precautions should I take when air quality is poor to protect my health?

**Answer:** The first step is to stay informed. Make sure you sign up for air quality alerts at [www.airnorthtexas.org](http://www.airnorthtexas.org). To protect yourself on poor air quality days, be sure to limit time outdoors, purify indoor air, stay hydrated and regularly check and replace your air filters in your home. Also be sure to protect pets by limiting their time outdoors.

**Question:** How can I help improve air quality?

**Answer:** Currently 10 counties in North Texas fall under nonattainment for air quality. NCTCOG has several programs in place to help protect and improve regional air quality. One way for everyone to get involved in the effort is Air North Texas. This educational effort offers actions individuals, governments and businesses can take to be part of the solution. For more information, visit [www.airnorthtexas.org](http://www.airnorthtexas.org).

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## NCTCOG undertakes effort to address illegal dumping of tires



Illegally dumped tires only do these tires are an environmental concern and a potential danger to the health of many North Texans. In April 2022, there were more than 12 million illegally dumped tires existing throughout the state, according to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Even when there are programs to help dispose of tires, they are often expensive and inconvenient.

The Regional Transportation Council has committed \$490,000 in Air Quality Initiatives funding for use in a regional tire program in hopes of resolving the issue in Dallas-Fort Worth.

The idea is that through the Regional Tire Task Force, a collaboration between NCTCOG's Transportation and Environment and Development departments, the strategies and implementation efforts already being used will help decrease the number of tires dumped annually.

The proposed program is a multifaceted approach consisting of education, outreach, technical and legal support, dump site identification for remediation, illegal dumping prevention, and enforcement.

Several cities throughout the region, including Dallas, Forney, Fort Worth and Grand Prairie, have scrap tire ordinances, which NCTCOG used to help craft a model ordinance and guidance that partners can adopt or implement. This has been added to the Mobility 2045 Policy Bundle.

Cities and counties that develop a plan, ordinance, or policy for transportation refuse recycling, or implement a transportation refuse recycling plan can earn Transportation Development Credits, which can be used to fulfill local match requirements for federal transportation projects.

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## Summer 2023 issue of Mobility Matters newsletter now available



The Summer 2023 issue of Mobility Matters is now online! This publication is a semi-annual newsletter about the transportation planning activities and air quality programs of NCTCOG and the Regional Transportation Council.

In this issue:

- Read about the DFW Discovery Trail, which will allow cyclists, walkers and joggers to experience the beauty of the region and the landscapes and wildlife unique to each of the cities.



- Learn about the latest developments in the drone industry, including best practices and where to safely fly these aircraft from NCTCOG's series of free drone workshops available on YouTube.
- Transportation director Michael Morris talks about the significance of broadband internet as a transportation issue.
- Collin County Commissioner Duncan Webb reflects on his experiences as chairman of the Regional Transportation Council.

These and more stories are available at

<https://nctcog.org/trans/about/publications/mm/mobility-matters-2023>.

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*For more information about Local Motion topics, contact Brian Wilson at 817-704-2511 or [bwilson@nctcog.org](mailto:bwilson@nctcog.org). Visit [www.nctcog.org/trans](http://www.nctcog.org/trans) for more information on the department.*

*--Imagery provided by NCTCOG and Getty Images.*

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