Outer Loop Route Study Background

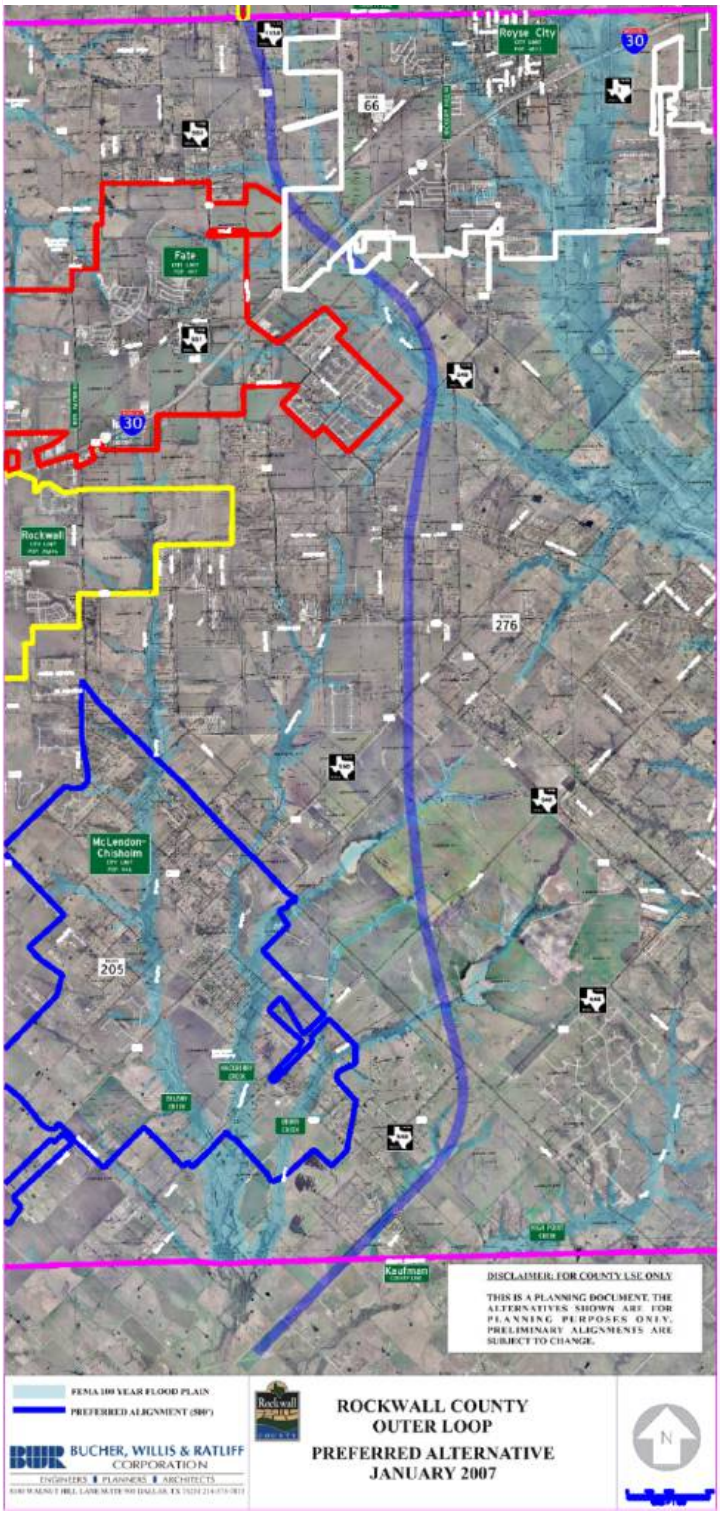
Beginnings

In 2002, then Governor Rick Perry directed the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to develop a statewide network of multimodal transportation improvements to meet demands expected in the 21st Century. In response to this directive to develop a comprehensive program, TxDOT started a planning study in March of 2005 that included evaluation of an outer loop with connectivity to Interstate Highway 35 (I-35) that would bypass the dense urbanized core of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. The Rockwall County Outer Loop is a break-out project with independent utility that would provide an integral part of the larger facility.

Rockwall County

In November 2005, Rockwall County initiated public outreach to develop potential alignments for the Rockwall portion of an outer loop around Dallas-Fort Worth. The alignments were further refined in December 2005 and a locally preferred alternative alignment was identified in January 2007. The goal was to incorporate this concept in the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Metropolitan Transportation Plan. This conceptual alignment is illustrated in **Error! Reference source not found.**.

FIGURE 1



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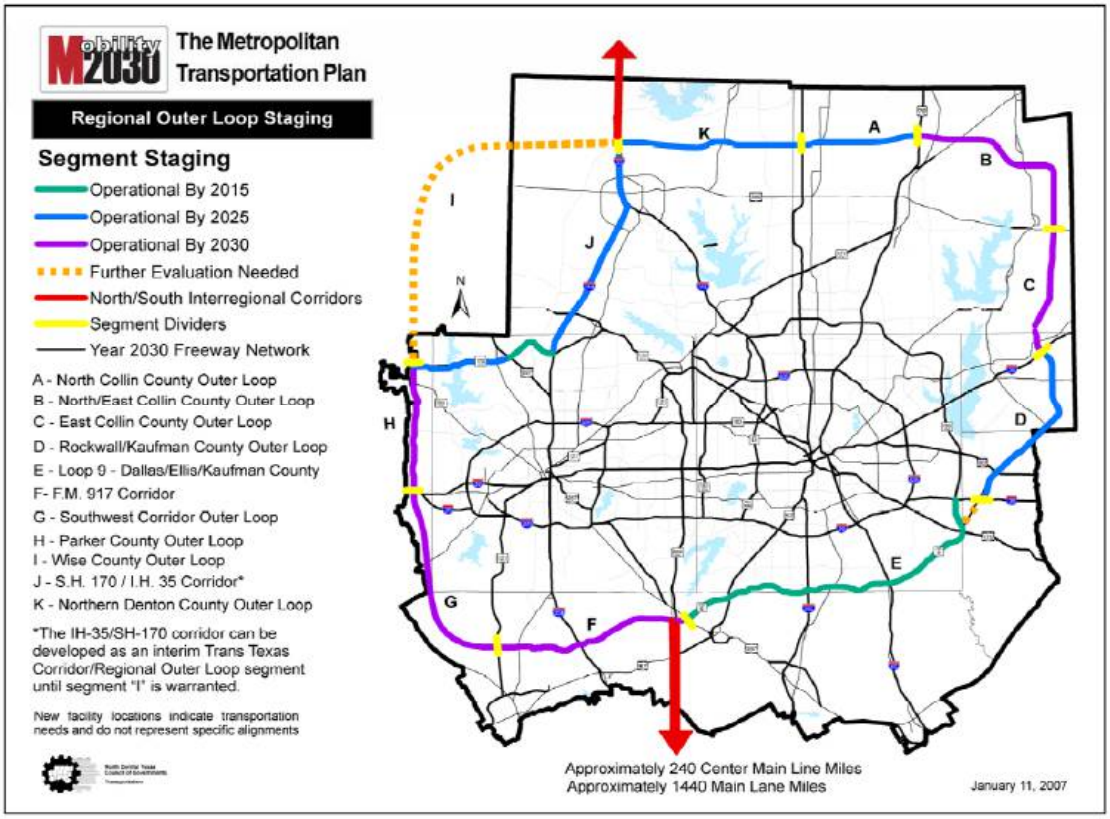
North Central Texas Council of Governments Efforts

In 2007, the NCTCOG included a regional outer loop in *Mobility 2030* as circumferential relief route for the Metroplex. The Rockwall County portion included segments C and D in the mobility plan shown in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2



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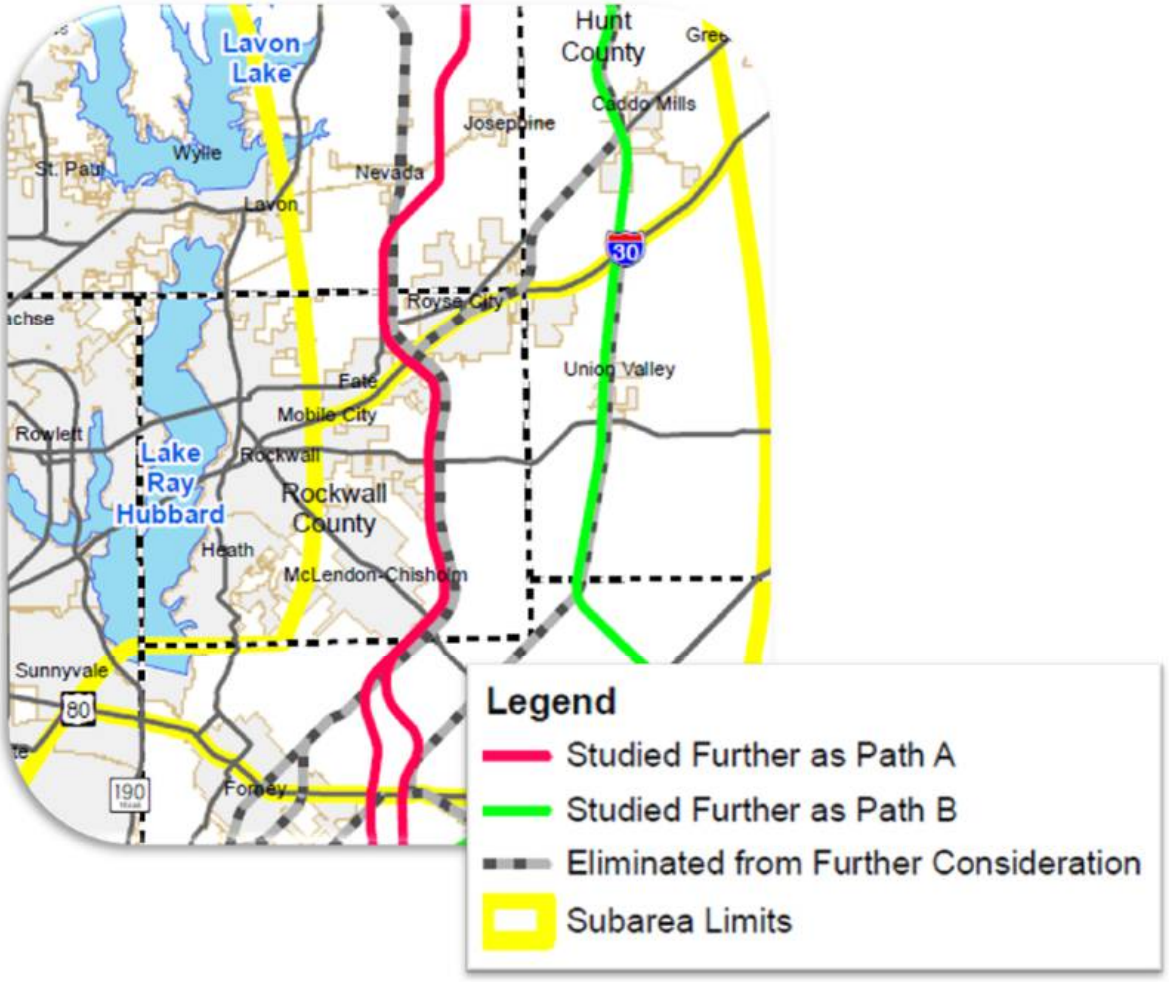
The NCTCOG continued to study the regional outer loop in its transportation plans, identifying it as a "deferred option": identified in previous plans but not in the fiscally constrained portion of the plan.

In 2011, the NCTCOG released the Regional Outer Loop Feasibility Study. The feasibility study concluded that while a complete outer loop was not needed based on population and traffic growth projections at that time, multiple sections had value on their own and could later be studied in greater detail. A map in the NCTCOG feasibility study defining potential alternatives that should be considered in the future is reproduced as Figure 3 below.

FIGURE 3



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The study recommended two corridors on the east side of the region: Path A and Path B. Path A travels through Rockwall County in the general location of the Rockwall County preferred corridor identified in 2007. Path B identified a route further east in Hunt County.

Rockwall County Feasibility Study, Environmental Documentation, and Schematic

Today, Rockwall County, in partnership with TxDOT and the local cities, has started a new study to revisit and further refine the Rockwall County Outer Loop as a corridor of independent utility. The goal of the current study is to develop alternatives by updating factors and analyses that are more than a decade old so that a preferred alternative can be identified that meets the current transportation needs. This will be accomplished by completing a feasibility study to identify reasonable alternatives, completing engineering schematic design plans, studying the potential impacts in the rigorous context of an environmental study that complies with the National Environmental Policy Act, and performing public involvement to provide project information and obtain input from stakeholders and the public to permit the advancement of the proposed project to construction.