

# Is NCTCOG Staff Dictating Regional Transportation Policy? Ctd.

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Unfair Park doubled down on coverage of the looming influence of [North Texas' most powerful bureaucrat](#) (http://frontburner.dmagazine.com/2014/08/11/is-nctcog-staff-dictating-regional-transportation-policy/), Texas Council of Governments transportation director Michael Morris, who, as [Jim Schutze puts it in](#) (http://blogs.dallasobserver.com/unfairpark/2014/08/how-can-a-regional-transportation-planner-act-like-hes-the-king-or-something-he-jus-can-wave-a-magic-wand-that-makes-land-values-in-one-place-soar-and-values-in-another-crater.) Who is he so powerful?

If you look back over the years, in fact, Morris has been the old establishment's most aggressive politician on transportation issues, [barnstorming in 2007](#) (http://blogs.dallasobserver.com/unfairpark/2012/05/no-matter-the-mayor-finally-sa.php) to save the Trinity River Toll Road, for example, when it was threatened by a referendum. If you compare what he has said about that particular project over the years, what leaps out is that Morris, an academic planner by profession, can muster highly technical-sounding, not to say deliberately inscrutable arguments to any position, even when he has to change position 180 degrees.

and why is he so powerful?

I don't think people get what the MPOs [municipal planning organizations, in other words, NCTCOG] have become, and Michael Morris is the poster boy for it. They have become their own kind of back channel, a sequester where the money can be diverted and controlled by the rhinestone leash-holders.

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Meanwhile, [Eric Nicholson tries to track down Morris' Arlington home](#) (http://blogs.dallasobserver.com/unfairpark/2014/08/never-ever-take-public-transit-to-michael-morris-house-via-public-transportation). It helps put in perspective just how embedded Morris' life is in the build and sp of the suburban dream. Here's a taste, but be sure to read through to the punchline regarding Michael Morris' vanity plates:

The Fort Worth Intermodal Transportation Center is a maze of buses, but route 9 is nowhere to be finally find a timetable, which tells me that route 9 is in Bay M, which I spot on the opposite end of parking lot. A security guard in a golf cart catches up to me as I'm putting my bike on the bus to yell at me for riding in the bus depot. I signal OK but am secretly glad to have broken the rules since the bus pulls away as soon as I'm on board. On foot, I would've missed it, and the next bus wasn't scheduled to come for another hour.

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