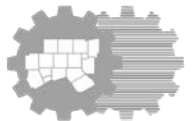




# Regional School Coordination Task Force Meeting

July 26, 2016



North Central Texas  
Council of Governments

**EPA Smart School  
Siting Tool**

**Technical  
Assistance  
Opportunity**

**EPA is looking for pilot communities interested in enhanced coordination of school siting and community planning to pilot the use of the tool**

**Pilots will receive one-on-one technical assistance from EPA to use the Smart School Siting Tool, and be on the leading edge of school planning**

# Task 2: Address Land Use- Transportation Problems and School Siting

Memo Summaries

# TIGER Grant Task 2 Memos

Summary memos of the research conducted on the following topics:

- A. State legislation and policies related to school siting requirements and land banking programs
- B. Land banking programs and best practices
- C. Developing a framework for a program for planning, establishing, replenishing, and maintaining acquisition funds and/or land banking for school siting
- D. Coordinating ISD, local government, and regional demographic projections
- E. Partnerships and funding sources

## A. Review State legislation and policies related to school siting requirements and land banking programs.

### **Texas' School Siting and Construction REGULATIONS:**

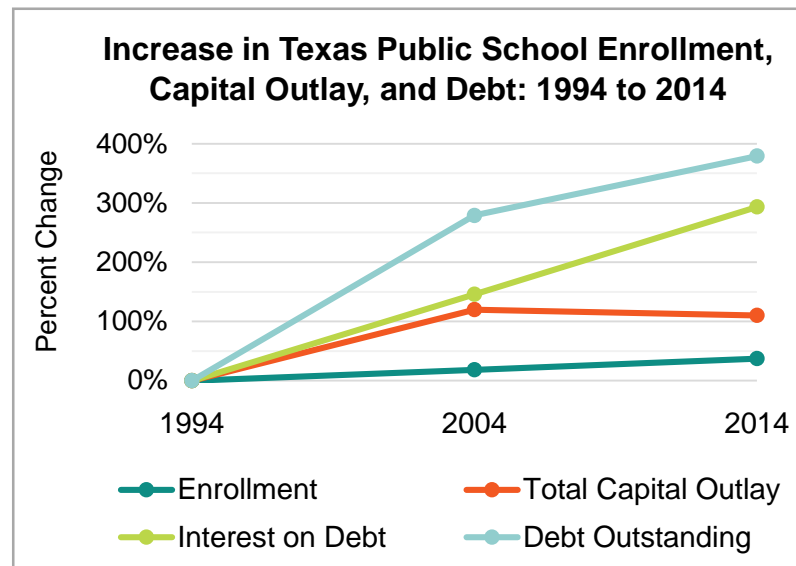
- Minimal regulation and oversight
  - No minimum acreage standards
  - Classroom sizes are defined, but variances are allowed
  - Districts are encouraged, but not required, to create long-range facility plans
  - Districts do not have to submit school facility plans to the State for review

## A. Review State legislation and policies related to school siting requirements and land banking programs.

### Texas' School Siting and Construction FUNDING:

- ISDs fund land purchases and construction projects by selling voter-approved general obligation bonds.
- To pay off debt, districts levy I&S property tax: up to 50 cents per \$100 assessed property value.

- Since 1994, the State has contributed 9% of the total funds spent on capital facilities.
  - Assistance with debt payment through Instructional Facilities Allotment (IFA) and Existing Debt Allotment (EDA)
  - New Instructional Facilities Allotment (NIFA) provides aid for furnishing and equipping new school campuses
  - Not reliable funding sources – dependent on legislature appropriations



Source: U.S. Census of Governments, Public Elementary-Secondary Education Finance Data. Note: 1994 and 2004 adjusted to 2014 dollars to account for inflation.

# A. Review State legislation and policies related to school siting requirements and land banking programs.

## Review of Other States' Policies and Practices:

- 27 states require districts to prepare capital facility plans
- 16 states have minimum acreage standards for school sites
- 29 states have policies or guidelines for the selection of school sites that go beyond minimum acreage
  - 20 have transportation access standards
  - 16 require/encourage interagency coordination or local government input
  - Standards typically enforced as part of the funding application process
- Land acquisition is eligible for state aid in 23 states
- Texas is one of only six states that provide funding for land acquisition but do not have guidance on the selection of school sites (others include Alabama, Delaware, Illinois, Iowa, and Montana)



A. Review State legislation and policies related to school siting requirements and land banking programs.

### **Case Study: Utah**

Prior to developing plans or specifications for a new school, school districts must coordinate with affected local land use authorities and utility providers to ensure that:

- Siting or expansion of the school in the intended location complies with local general plans and doesn't conflict with land uses
- All local governmental services and utilities can be provided in a logical and cost-effective manner and that potential traffic hazards are avoided or appropriately mitigated



A. Review State legislation and policies related to school siting requirements and land banking programs.

**Recommendations for the Texas Legislature and the Texas Education Agency (TEA):**

1. Provide incentives to districts to develop five to ten year capital facility plans.
2. Develop school siting standards that districts can utilize.
3. Convene a Task Force of municipal and school district leaders to evaluate recommendations and policy changes.

## B. Research land banking programs and best practices.

- Key barrier to building community-centered schools: finding sites of adequate size at affordable price.
- Proactive solution = Land Banking: The practice of acquiring land before it is needed to build new schools, thereby adding certainty to the development process and allowing better integration of schools into neighborhoods.
- How:
  - Including funds in each bond measure to purchase land and replace land in a land bank
  - Through developer donations and set-asides
- Challenge: “We are not in the real estate business.” – School Board of one ISD in the region
- No state legislation for land banking for schools.



Source: Frisco ISD

## B. Research land banking programs and best practices.

### **Recommendations: School Districts**

- Partner with city to raise awareness about importance of planning for schools, and about district's standards for schools and school sites.
- Develop facility plans that anticipate needs for the next 5-10+ years, and identifies areas where facilities may be needed in the future.
- Work with cities and counties to discuss opportunities for land swaps.

### **Recommendations: Local Governments**

- Encourage or require residential developers or applicants for zoning changes to contact and coordinate with the school district.
- Explore opportunities to partner through the **Urban Land Bank Demonstration** Program to locate elementary schools in, or in close proximity to, land being banked for affordable housing developments.

## C. Develop a framework for a regional land banking program for school siting (establishing, replenishing, and maintaining acquisition funds).

**Question:** Is it cheaper for a transportation agency to proactively assist with the purchase of land versus pay to fix safety issues or see reduced mobility when two or three schools locate on a new \$20 million arterial investment, bringing down speeds and increasing congestion?

### New School Zone in Pampa

Published: Thursday, August 27th 2015, 6:36 pm CDT  
Updated: Thursday, August 27th 2015, 8:13 pm CDT



A new school zone is slowing drivers down on state highway 70 in Pampa.

Drivers on State Highway 70 are normally traveling around 55 mph as they approach Pampa Junior High School but the new school zone slows them down to 35 to help keep students safe.

### New school zone speed limit coming outside Denison High School

Posted: Mon 8:26 PM, May 04, 2015

By: Chelsi Smith - Email



[Home](#) / [Headlines List](#) / [Article](#)

DENISON, TX-- Drivers will soon need to slow down on State Highway 91, near the new Denison High School. It's a change concerned residents have wanted since school started.

After a handful of accidents this school year, some resulting in minor injuries, Denison ISD Superintendent Dr. Henry Scott says he contacted the city and requested a school zone with reduced speeds.

"Essentially for the safety of our students and the parents who are dropping students off," said Dr. Henry Scott. "We just feel it is essential that we have a speed zone there."



## C. Develop a framework for a regional land banking program for school siting (establishing, replenishing, and maintaining acquisition funds).

**Pros:** Provide more regional guidance about where to best locate schools so as to not negatively impact the regional transportation system.

**Cons:** To keep up with the rapid growth in the region and to be truly useful to school districts, it would require significant levels of funding.

**Finding:** The goals of the land banking program may be accomplished at significantly less cost through regional guidance for school siting, encouraging school districts to conduct long-term facility planning and include funds in bond referendums to purchase land for land banking.

## D. Coordinate independent school district, local government, and regional demographic projections for future demand for schools and housing.

- Similarities:
  - Projections guide infrastructure investments
  - Some cities and ISDs hire consultants to conduct high-level employment and housing trend analyses
  - School districts (or their consultants) and the regional government both monitor new developments
- ISDs have the shortest horizon (10 years) and most frequent interim reporting (annual).
- Typical unit of analysis varies significantly: ISDs = elementary attendance zone; City = city boundary; NCTCOG = counties, forecast districts, and traffic survey zones.
- Annual fluctuations in enrollment are much more significant to school districts than neighborhood fluctuations are to local or regional governments.

**Elementary Attendance Zones  
(Dallas ISD)**



**Traffic Survey Zones  
(NCTCOG)**



## D. Coordinate independent school district, local government, and regional demographic projections for future demand for schools and housing.

### **Recommendations: School Districts**

- Conduct 5-10 year projections
- Conduct build-out analyses for bigger picture of long-term development trends and potential site needs
- Meet periodically with local governments to understand market and timing of various projects

### **Recommendations: Cities**

- Notify districts of applications for residential development or zoning changes, or thoroughfare plan modifications that may impact district's build-out analysis or enrollment projections
- Assess ISD projections for new facility locations early on to determine if multimodal transportation improvements are planned in these locations/areas

### **Recommendations: NCTCOG**

- Consider metrics of educational quality and capacity in regional population projections and modeling.

## E. Identify partnerships and funding sources.

### **Recommendations: School Districts and Local Governments**

- Expand utilization of joint use facilities to leverage resources/improve efficiency
- Involve local governments early on in the school siting process—better understand pros/cons, ultimate costs for site development

### **Recommendations: State of Texas**

- Further examine use of bonds as primary means to finance school facilities, and the impact of interest payments on the overall funds available for schools and education



# TIGER Grant Tasks 3 & 4

Criteria for Selecting Pilot Projects

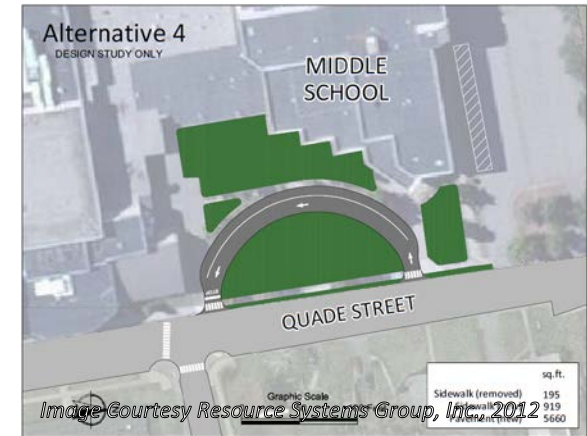
# Safety Audits

- Scope of Work: Develop Safe Routes to School (SRTS) infrastructure plans with community buy-in.
- Conduct safety audits of existing conditions.
- Deliverables/Recommendations:
  - Key infrastructure improvements
  - Multi-modal routes for students
  - “How-To” develop guide for other locations.
- Eligible Schools: Public schools serving grades K-8
- Selection Criteria:
  - High bicycle and pedestrian crash locations
  - Proximity to students
  - Environmental Justice areas



# Traffic Impact Analyses

- Deliverables:
  - Findings and recommendations for each school
  - A guide of when/why/how of transportation analysis for schools
- Eligible Schools: Public schools serving grades K-12
- Selection Criteria:
  - Traffic congestion around school (travel times/delay)
  - Traffic volumes on nearby major roadways
  - High vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian crash location
  - Environmental justice area



# Mobility 2040: Policy Bundle

# Policy Bundles - Appendix G: Mobility 2040

- A voluntary list of **policies and actions** that local governments, transportation agencies, and school districts **can choose to adopt** in order to receive a possible **offset of the required local funding match** in transportation projects.
  - Need to fulfill at least 50% of policies to be eligible for offset
- Two School-Related Policies: (with associated action type)
  1. **School Siting Coordination** (Governing Body Approval)
  2. **Safe Access to Schools** (Joint Staff Coordination)
- NCTCOG staff in the process of developing an annual survey for ISDs, transportation and governmental entities to apply, and for NCTCOG staff to assess if they have satisfied 50% of policy options
- Workshop planned for September

## Safe Access to Schools

**Policy:** Engage TxDOT, the City, and all ISDs within their jurisdiction to partner, prepare, and implement Safe Routes to School plans for existing and future schools, to address the five Es of engineering, education, enforcement, encouragement, and evaluation. Plans would include topics such as traffic operations, safety, bicycle, and walking access, etc.

**Applicable Agencies:** Cities, Counties, TxDOT, and ISDs

**Action Type:** Joint Staff Coordination

# Safe Access to Schools

## Proposed Survey Question: (City)

1. Does your city coordinate regularly with all ISDs in its jurisdiction as well as county and TxDOT staff (as applicable) to develop or implement a city-wide Safe Routes to School (SRTS) plan and SRTS plans for existing and future schools, in which all five Es are addressed?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No

If yes, please upload meeting agendas, minutes, or notes for at least two meetings in the last year of city and ISD staff (and county and TxDOT staff as applicable), which indicate that the development or implementation of SRTS plan(s) were discussed. The documentation for each meeting should also include the date, time, and location of the meeting, and a roster with signatures of all parties present.

# Safe Access to Schools - DRAFT

## Documentation of Interagency Coordination

- What counts as “coordinate regularly”? At least two meetings in the last year, from the time when the survey responses are submitted.
- Who should attend meetings? City and ISD staff, and county and TxDOT staff if schools are in unincorporated area or on state roadways.
- Types of documentation that NCTCOG will accept? Meeting agendas, minutes, notes, etc..
- What information should the documentation include?
  - Indication that the development or implementation of SRTS plan(s) were discussed
  - Date, time, and location of the meeting
  - Roster with signatures of all parties present

Mobility 2040 Policy Bundle  
Policy #7, Proof Template: Meeting Minutes for Safe Routes to School Coordination

**MINUTES**  
**Safe Routes to School Committee Meeting**  
[Date]  
[Time]  
[Location]

**Present:**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Signature</u>
	[City]	
	[ISD]	
	[County]	
	[TxDOT]	

**Call to Order:**  
Approval of past meeting minutes.

**SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PLAN:**

- Discussion of progress on Safe Routes to School master plan, or campus plans
- Next steps

**ENGINEERING:**  
Topic Examples:

- Update on progress of engineering projects
- Discussion and coordination on funding opportunities
- Identification and discussion of existing schools with any traffic safety or congestion issues
- Discussion of potential transportation-related concerns for future schools

**EDUCATION & ENCOURAGEMENT:**  
Topic Examples:

- Reports on education at participating schools
- Upcoming bike rodeos
- International Walk and Bike to School Days



## School Siting Coordination

**Policy:** Engage TxDOT, the City, and all ISDs within their jurisdiction to collaborate on the ISD's growth plans, the City's comprehensive plan, and other general coordination. Discussions should be had regarding school siting, safety, etc.

**Applicable Agencies:** Cities, Counties, TxDOT, and ISDs

**Action Type:** Governing Body Approval

**Proposed Survey Question:**

1. Has your [city, county, school board, district] adopted a school district coordination policy or resolution for collaboration with local [cities, the county, TxDOT, and/or ISDs] on growth plans, municipal planning efforts, and other areas of general coordination such as school siting and safety?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No

If yes, please upload a copy of the adopted policy or resolution.

# School Siting Coordination

## Documentation of Governing Body Approval of Coordination

- What qualifies as a “Governing Body Approval”? Resolution or minute order that reflects approval for the measure.
- Resolutions typically include:
  - Problem statements
  - Statements of costs
  - Statements of growth
  - Statements of traffic and safety concern
  - Statements of partnerships
  - Statements of action (s)

# School Siting Coordination

## Documentation of Governing Body Approval of Coordination

- Examples of “action” language that might be included:
  - Coordinate regularly through meetings and assigned staff liaisons
  - Sharing student enrollment data, growth projections, or applications for residential development
  - Identifying opportunities for joint use of facilities
  - Involving school district in comprehensive planning, or city/county/ TxDOT in school facility planning or school siting



# Questions?

# Contact Information

**Karla Weaver, AICP**

Program Manager

(817) 608-2376

[kweaver@nctcog.org](mailto:kweaver@nctcog.org)

**Kathryn Rush**

Transportation Planner

(817) 704-5601

[krush@nctcog.org](mailto:krush@nctcog.org)



[www.nctcog.org/schools](http://www.nctcog.org/schools)