

# NCTCOG FACT SHEET

August 2023

## QUICK TAKE

### What:

The NCTCOG Freight Planning Program conducted an analysis of freight-related land uses (warehouses, distribution centers and manufacturing facilities) throughout the region. The analysis gave guidance for freight-land use development policy, in accordance with industry best practices, and highlighted important trends for industrial buildings in North Texas.

### Significance:

Without following design best practices, freight facilities could cause harm to communities, homes and other sensitive land uses.

### By the Numbers:

**27**

NCTCOG analyzed more than 2,400 North Texas freight facilities. The median facility age is 27 years old, and an average of 25 new facilities were constructed per year from 1950 to 2019.

## Addressing Freight Land Use Conflicts

Freight-oriented developments (FODs) are collections of buildings and land developed for the purpose of supporting activities such as the large-scale manufacturing, storage, packaging, shipping, transporting, or reconfiguring of finished products or raw materials. North Texas is a national hub for these activities because the region is at the crossroads of multiple interstate corridors. FODs are essential for residents of North Texas (and many other regions across the country) to access household goods and economic opportunities. These types of facilities are often located near similar buildings. However, when freight and other land use types (residential, commercial, institutional, etc.) are developed adjacent to one another the potential for conflict arises. This conflict can take the form of noise pollution, light pollution, safety hazards, property damage and reduced quality of life.

Increasing demand for freight transportation has led to the construction of newer, larger facilities across the region; simultaneously, the rising price of land in the urban core has resulted in much of the construction occurring on the outskirts. This can mean shippers are located farther away from the customers they serve, and trucks must make longer trips to complete deliveries.

Land-use decision-makers at the municipal level can impact this trend by monitoring the patterns of new freight developments and requiring developers to implement Good Neighbor Strategies, which include facility design features aimed at minimizing negative impacts on surrounding communities. These strategies include installing downward-facing exterior lighting, maintaining buffer zones between incompatible land uses, facing loading bays away from residences or schools and ensuring entry/exit points are in a safe and logical location.

The Freight Land Use Policy Toolkit describes these and many other best practices for municipal planners and freight land developers. Learn more at <https://www.nctcog.org/trans/plan/freight/land-use-analysis>.



Photo: Getty Images

*Freight facilities are essential for residents of North Texas to access household goods and economic opportunities. By following best practices, the region can ensure these centers facilitate the efficient movement of goods.*

# Freight Land Use Preservation

## Freight Sprawl

Although the concept of urban sprawl has become common, a lesser-known freight-related phenomenon is also taking place in cities across North America. Freight facility dispersion (otherwise known as freight sprawl), occurs when warehouses and distribution centers are forced out of the urbanized area due to:

- Increasing land prices
- Changes in land use
- Economic factors
- Pressure from the community to relocate

The result is that shippers are farther away from the customers they serve, and therefore must take longer trips to complete deliveries. This increases fuel and labor costs and drives up freight emissions.

## Preserving Industrial Land Uses in the Urban Core

NCTCOG analysis indicates that the average distance between urban freight facilities and the central business district of Fort Worth increased by 29% from 1970 to 2019, with a 17% increase for the Dallas central business district over the same period. Despite this, 92% of regional freight facilities analyzed were located in the boundaries of a census-

designated urbanized area. Cities can help preserve urban freight land uses by:

- Incorporating industrial spaces into the municipal comprehensive plan
- Enforcing high standards of site design
- Providing incentives for logistics companies to locate within a jurisdiction
- Considering the transportation system impacts of various shipping modes (truck, rail and air cargo)
- Mitigating land use conflicts where they exist by implementing Good Neighbor Strategies

Freight facilities – and the goods movement capacities they support – bring enormous economic benefits and employment opportunities and are essential to the quality of life in North Texas. To maintain these benefits, it is important to preserve freight land uses in the urban center.

## Freight Land Use Policy Toolkit

To support the responsible and effective development of freight infrastructure in the region, NCTCOG developed the Freight Land Use Policy Toolkit. This document outlines the freight planning process and introduces practical policy tools for both public and private entities, ranging from economic data collection and facility design characteristics to truck-routing guidance and brownfield remediation opportunities. More information about the NCTCOG Freight Land Use Compatibility Analysis can be found at <https://www.nctcog.org/trans/plan/freight/land-use-analysis>.



Photo: Getty Images

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