

Quick Take

What:

Community Schools and Transportation Program

Significance:

Through interagency coordination and the promotion of best practices, the program aims to improve planning for community-centered schools and multimodal transportation options to schools.

Program History:

The program was initiated in 2015 with funding from a federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant. It builds upon several past initiatives and the Regional Transportation Council's Policy Supporting School Districts, adopted in 2013.

By the Numbers:

1.3 million

The region's population that were school-age children (5 to 17 years) as of 2014 (20% of the total population).

30%

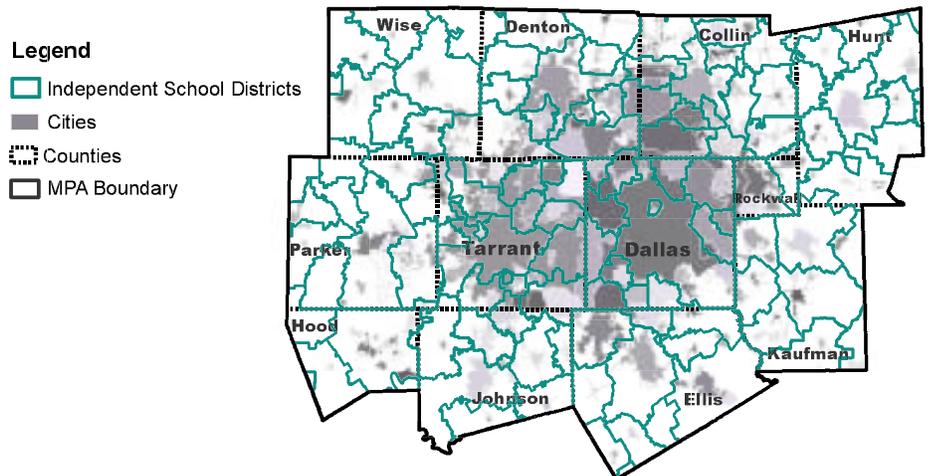
The increase in the number of cars on the road between 7:15 and 8:15 a.m. during the school year.

Improving Travel to School

Dallas-Fort Worth is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the country, putting tremendous strain on infrastructure—including its transportation and school systems.

The population of the Dallas-Fort Worth region is projected to increase from 7.2 million in 2017 to 10.7 million in 2040. During that time the number of school-age children (5 to 17 years) is estimated to increase by more than 750,000. The region's transportation system will need to serve 50 percent more trips to and from schools to accommodate this growth. Hundreds of schools will need to be built or renovated. The continued boom in school construction, and the planning decisions around that construction and renovation, will have important implications for education, travel, health, and the environment.

By addressing current school siting issues and promoting safe routes to walk and bicycle to school, the Community Schools and Transportation Program is intended to be a holistic approach to mitigating traffic congestion, and improving air quality and safety around our region's most vulnerable population group.



The program encourages collaboration and coordination among the region's 127 school districts, 209 local governments, and multiple transportation agencies.

Goals of the Community Schools and Transportation Program



Encourage **interagency coordination**



Advance long-term planning for **school siting**



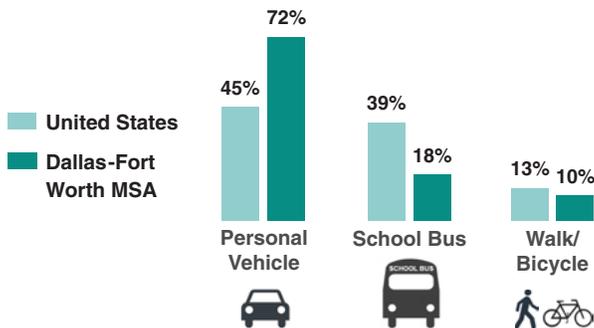
Improve **transportation safety** near schools



Promote **multimodal transportation** options to schools

FACTSheet

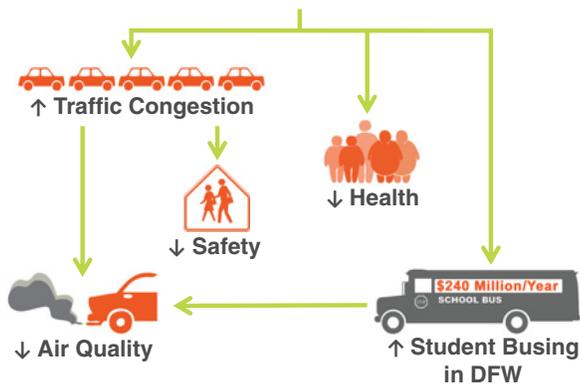
Transportation Mode to School



Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, 2009 National Household Travel Survey.

In the Dallas-Fort Worth region, fewer children walk and bicycle to school, and more children arrive in private vehicles when compared to the national average. Consequences of less walking and biking include increased traffic congestion and safety conflicts, diminished air quality, less physical activity, and more education funds spent on student busing.

Less Walking and Biking to School



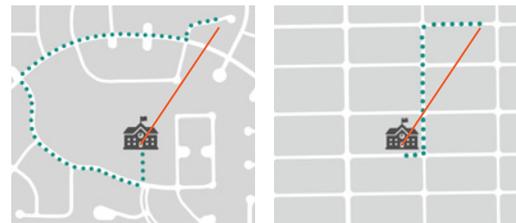
Since the late 1960s, the percentage of children who walk or bicycle to school has declined from a national average of 48 percent in 1969 to 13 percent in 2009. In the Dallas-Fort Worth region, only 10 percent of children arrived at school by walking or biking in 2009.

While there are many barriers to increasing the number of children who walk or bicycle to school, the two critical factors are traffic safety and the distance between schools and homes.

School Siting

For the majority of students to be able to walk or ride their bikes, schools should be located in close proximity to the majority of students they serve. Additionally, both natural and human-made barriers should be taken into account when determining a school's location and attendance boundaries.

As demonstrated by the graphic below, poor connectivity to residential areas can increase the travel distance between homes and a school, and result in greater demand for busing and parent transportation.



Planning for community-centered schools with safe bicycle and pedestrian access can improve traffic circulation, safety, air quality, and the health of students and the overall community.

What You Can Do

Local Governments

- Ensure municipal planning addresses school facilities
- Work with the local school district to develop Safe Routes to School travel plans for every elementary and middle school
- Construct safe sidewalks and bike-ways around new and existing schools to provide alternative transportation choices
- Conduct regular meetings with school district staff

School Districts

- Plan for new school campuses to have safe transportation in all modes
- Integrate new and renovated schools into the surrounding community
- Implement bicycle and pedestrian safety curriculum in elementary and middle school PE classes
- Conduct regular meetings with local government staff

Parents and General Public

- Start a Walking School Bus at your school (NCTCOG.org/walking_school_bus)
- Teach your kids about bicycle and pedestrian safety at home (LookOutTexans.org)
- Encourage local government to improve sidewalks and crosswalks around schools
- Map out safe routes with children from home to school

Local Governments and School Districts

Attend NCTCOG's Regional School Coordination Task Force meetings

Quick Take

What:

Bicycle and Pedestrian Traffic Count Program

Significance:

Data collection efforts are underway documenting bicycle and pedestrian usage on shared-use paths in five cities across four counties. The 2015 annual report presents highlights from the program's first year of data collection.

Program History:

Installation of count equipment began in 2014, with many more count stations installed in 2015. Data is collected continuously and serves as a baseline from which growth will be studied over time.

By the Numbers:

4.3 million

The total number of bicycle and pedestrian traffic counts recorded in 2015 at the 26 count station locations.

Region Collecting Bike, Pedestrian Counts

To support effective bicycle and pedestrian planning, the North Central Texas Council of Governments is collecting data about bicycle and pedestrian facility usage in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

NCTCOG partnered in 2014 and 2015 with several local agencies to install data collection equipment. NCTCOG and the partner agencies identified shared-use paths with significant value as active transportation corridors, which connect to major destinations and transit stations. Equipment was installed along the Trinity Trails in Fort Worth, the Denton Branch Rail Trail, Plano's Chisholm Trail, and North Richland Hills' Cotton Belt Trail. NCTCOG receives data collected by other city-owned counters in the region, and those count stations are reflected in the annual report, available at www.NCTCOG.org/BikePedCountData. The permanent equipment utilizes inductive loop and passive infrared sensor technology to distinguish bicyclists from pedestrians, as well as their direction of travel.

Permanent counting equipment is installed throughout Dallas-Fort Worth to help transportation planners better understand active transportation activity.



Goals of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Traffic Count Program

To better help planners understand where and how people are bicycling and walking in the region, the NCTCOG Bicycle and Pedestrian Traffic Count Program has the following goals:

- Collect baseline data from which NCTCOG can track bicycle and pedestrian usage over time
- Evaluate monthly, weekly, and daily patterns and trends
- Determine the impact of specific projects (before and after) and study the relationship of the surrounding land use to the recorded bicycle and pedestrian traffic volumes

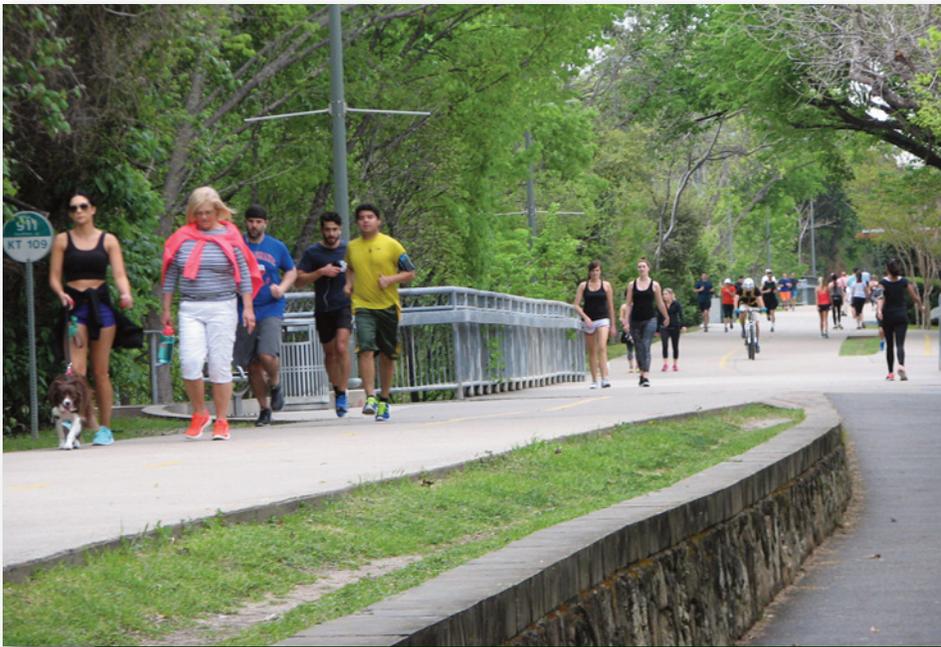
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Among the 26 count stations, the combined mode share is 50 percent bicyclists and 50 percent pedestrians. However, the location of the shared-use path significantly impacts the ratio of pedestrians to bicyclists who use the corridor. Paths with count stations located farther from nearby development or population density generally report a lower percentage of pedestrians and a higher percentage of bicyclists. Corridors in dense residential and retail areas, such as the Katy Trail in Dallas, have among the highest percentage of pedestrians in the region (up to 82 percent) and the most overall users.

NCTCOG has mobile equipment available for loan to local jurisdictions for purposes of conducting short-term counts of bicyclists and pedestrians on either shared-use paths or streets.

To reserve NCTCOG's mobile counting equipment, please contact **Daniel Snyder** at dsnyder@nctcog.org or **817-608-2394**.

For more information on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Traffic Count Program, please visit www.NCTCOG.org/BikePedCountData.



Data gathered from the region's permanent bicycle-pedestrian traffic counters indicates an even split between bicyclists and pedestrians on the region's facilities. However, some trails are characterized by heavy use by pedestrians, while others are more likely to be frequented by bicyclists. For example, a high percentage of residents who use the Katy Trail are pedestrians.

Number of Permanent Count Stations Monitored by NCTCOG in 2015*

City of Dallas	14
City of Denton	2
City of North Richland Hills	1
City of Plano	6
Tarrant Regional Water District (Fort Worth)	3
Total	26

** Some cities may have additional count stations not monitored by NCTCOG.*



North Central Texas Council of Governments

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