

# Meeting Minutes

<b>Subject</b>	Regional School Coordination Task Force	<b>Date</b>	Tuesday – July 26, 2016
<b>Facilitator</b>	NCTCOG	<b>Time</b>	2:00 pm – 3:30 pm
<b>Location</b>	NCTCOG – Regional Forum Room	<b>Recorded by</b>	Kathryn Rush
<b>Attendees</b>	Sam Adamie (Tarrant County Public Health), Amy Albright (Dallas), Iftekhar Ali (TxDOT), Eric Fladager (Fort Worth), Trey Ingram (NCTCOG), Brain Jahn (Fort Worth), Bill Knight (Denton ISD), Quadeer Mohammed (TxDOT), Chandra Muruganandham (Fort Worth), Sef Okoth (Dallas), Ross Rivers (VLK Architects), Kathryn Rush (NCTCOG), Leesa Vardeman (VLK Architects), Karla Weaver (NCTCOG).		

<b>Meeting Purpose</b>	The purpose of the Regional School Coordination Task Force is to provide a venue for improved interagency coordination, and discussion of NCTCOG school-related initiatives. This meeting was focused on an opportunity for cities and school districts to receive technical assistance from the EPA to use the new Smart School Siting Tool, NCTCOG staff's research into school siting topics as part of the TIGER planning grant, opportunities for schools to receive free Safe Routes to School (SRTS) plans and traffic analyses, and the policies related to school coordination in NCTCOG's Mobility 2040 Policy Bundle.
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Discussion Items	
<p>Prior to attendee introductions, NCTCOG staff summarized and answered questions related to the EPA Smart School Siting Tool webinar that was held prior to the meeting from 1 - 2 p.m. Any cities or school districts that were interested in receiving free technical assistance from the EPA to use the tool were encouraged to contact NCTCOG staff for more information.</p>	
<p><b>1. Presentation and Discussion: TIGER Grant Task 2 – School Siting Memos and Guidebook</b></p> <p>NCTCOG staff provided a summary of the findings and recommendations that resulted from the memos prepared as part of Task 2 of the TIGER grant. The memos included information on state policies related to school siting and land banking, land banking best practices, a regional framework for land banking, coordinating demographic and enrollment projections, and partnerships and funding sources. Some of the major findings included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texas is one of only six states that provide funding for land acquisition for schools but do not regulate or provide guidance on the selection of school sites</li> <li>• Texas does not have any regulation or guidance on land banking for school sites</li> <li>• One of the key challenges to land banking is educating school boards and voters on the benefits and cost long-term cost savings that can be gained</li> </ul> <p>Leesa Vardeman supported the recommendation by NCTCOG staff that school districts develop long-range facility plans that anticipate needs for the next 5 to 10 years. Sef Okoth from the City of Dallas requested specific ways that city demographic projections and school district enrollment projections could be better coordinated. A copy of the state law and policy comparison matrix that NCTCOG staff developed was requested by staff from the City of Fort Worth.</p>	
<p><b>2. Presentation: TIGER Grant Tasks 3 &amp; 4 – Criteria for Selecting Pilot Projects</b></p> <p>NCTCOG staff provided an overview of the criteria that has been developed to select pilot schools for the SRTS plans and safety audits, and traffic analyses. Only public elementary and middle schools are eligible for safety</p>	

audits, as these are the age groups most likely to walk and bike to school. All public schools serving grades K-12 are eligible for traffic analyses. Attendees were encouraged to send information on any schools they would recommend for consideration for the pilot projects to NCTCOG staff.

Staff from the City of Fort Worth asked if there are zoning mechanisms, such as form-based codes, being examined in relation to the pilot projects to ensure existing and future schools have safe routes to walk and bike to school, and that schools are sited in such a way as to encourage walking and biking. NCTCOG staff responded that they will try to include any existing information on zoning mechanisms in the school siting guidebook under development. Future opportunities will also be considered but that a specific review of development code is outside the tasks approved under the TIGER grant.

**3. Presentation and Discussion: Mobility 2040 Policy Bundle – Survey and Examples**

NCTCOG staff gave an overview of the two school siting and transportation-related policies in Appendix G of Mobility 2040: Safe Access to Schools, and School Siting Coordination. These are voluntary 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. To assess which agencies are implementing the minimum number of policies (50 percent) to receive the offset, NCTCOG plans to send out an annual survey. Attendees were asked to review and provide comments on the two school-related survey questions and the examples of documentation developed by NCTCOG staff. NCTCOG plans to host a workshop on the Policy Bundle in September, prior to STTC on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Sef Okoth asked if the joint staff coordination required to fulfill the Safe Access to Schools policy needs to be with all school districts in a city (for example, the City of Dallas is served by upwards of 10 school districts). Karla Weaver responded that was to be determined, and NCTCOG staff will decide based on the responses received from cities in the first year of the survey.

Sef Okoth asked if individual ISDs in the region have policies to coordinate with cities. NCTCOG staff indicated that, based on a series of interviews that were conducted in the spring, few ISDs have policies to coordinate with local governments or school siting policies in general. Leesa Vardeman added that there are guidelines that school districts follow, but that they are not in writing. Site-specific factors, such as topography and water retention, can also have a major impact on school siting decisions.

NCTCOG staff indicated that the presentation materials would be posted on the NCTCOG’s website ([nctcog.org/schools](http://nctcog.org/schools)).

Action Item(s)			
	Item	Responsibility	Target Completion Date
1	NCTCOG to post meeting materials on website	NCTCOG	August
2	NCTCOG to send out the link to the webinar recording.	NCTCOG	August
3	NCTCOG to post the table of state policies and guidance related to school siting on website	NCTCOG	September
4	NCTCOG to prepare an example of the School Siting Coordination resolution requested as part of the Mobility 2040 Policy Bundle	NCTCOG	September

**Next Meeting**

**Date: October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**Time: 1 - 2:30 pm (pre-meeting webinar from 12 - 1 pm)**

**Location: NCTCOG**