School Siting and Transportation

City of Denton and Denton ISD
March 5, 2012

North Central Texas Council of Governments
Common Goal

All schools should provide a safe and healthy learning environment with these same principles applied to the transportation system.
Region-Wide Interest in Coordination

April 2010, the Regional Transportation Council and NCTCOG staff hosted a school siting workshop with TxDOT, inviting elected officials, local independent school districts, and city staff.

Coordination Issues:
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Air Quality

Next Steps:
- Identify common concerns and goals
- Combine funding and other financial incentives
- Coordinate planning

Arlington, TX: Active school zone where location adjacent to a primary arterial street creates concerns over student and driver safety.
Region-Wide Interest in Coordination

February 2011, NCTCOG and TxDOT hosted a school siting workshop with the City of McKinney and McKinney ISD.

Discussion Topics:
  Traffic Congestion
  Health and Safety
  Community Benefits
  Safe Routes to School

Next Steps:
  Coordinated planning
  Interviews
  Land banking/Land acquisition partnerships
  School Siting White Paper (under review)
Region-Wide Interest in Coordination

The NAS Fort Worth, JRB Regional Coordination Committee is working with area ISDs to address transportation issues in the area surrounding the base. HUD funding received to support plan development.

Participating Districts:
- Castleberry ISD
- Fort Worth ISD
- White Settlement ISD

Transportation Issues:
- Safety
- Bicycle/Pedestrian Access
- Signalization
- Circulation

River Oaks, TX: Active school zone adjacent to elementary school where safety, bicycle/pedestrian access, and circulation have been of concern.
Common School and Transportation Concerns

- Cost
- Health and Safety
- Traffic Congestion
- Environment
- Concerns
- Sense of Community
- Site Design and Infrastructure
- Future Growth
- Inter-Agency Coordination
**Common Concern: Cost**

**Land Availability** — ISDs compete with private developers for land.

**School Size** — Minimum acreage requirements, enrollment thresholds.

**Distance** — Larger schools located far from the communities they are intended to serve. Additional costs and infrastructure burdens of transportation and other infrastructure.
Common Concern: Health and Safety

Fewer children are able to walk or bike to school.

1969: 42% of students walked or biked to school
2001: 15% of students walked or biked to school

Mode of Travel to School, Children Ages 6-12, 1969 and 2001*


Common Concern: Health and Safety (cont.)

Schools are located farther from neighborhoods where students live.

In 1969, 66% of students lived less than three miles from school.*

By 2001, less than 50% lived less than three miles from school.**

School siting can contribute to active lifestyles and better health outcomes.

The percent of overweight children has doubled in the last 30 years.‡

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Common Concern: Traffic Congestion

In 2007, 7% to 11% of all non-work trips during AM and PM peak travel times were school related.*

Average nearly nine miles per trip

Impacts local economies:
Longer commute times
Lost productivity
Wasted fuel

Common Concern: Environment

School location can directly impact local air quality.
EPA: “Neighborhood schools” achieved a 15% reduction in auto-related emissions.*

Negative impacts from large, remote school sites.
- Reduces open space and farm land
- Poor storm water runoff
- Inefficient use of natural resources

Common Concern: Sense of Community

Location impacts opportunities to create schools as neighborhood centers for education and civic life.

Public School Enrollment and Number of Public Schools for Selected Years, 1930-2016*

Common Concern: Sense of Community (cont.)

Students in smaller schools exhibit better attendance, higher grade point averages, higher outcomes on standardized tests, and are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities.

Community-centered schools can increase interaction between teachers and parents.
Common Concern: Site Design and Infrastructure

Schools are constructed and transportation and infrastructure must respond to the need.
Common Concern: Site Design and Infrastructure (cont.)

Transportation investments become significantly less effective when schools are located on thoroughfare streets once investment is made.

Schools are major financial investments for a community that often lead to demand for new:
- Roads, traffic signals
- Sewer lines, utilities
- Other infrastructure and services
Common Concern: Future Growth

Growth

Infrastructure Demands

School Siting
Common Concern: Future Growth (cont.)

School siting does not always follow growth; in some instances, the development of new schools can attract future growth and lead to unanticipated infrastructure demands.

Prioritize investments, identify mutual benefits.

Demographics — Who has the data?
Application of Common Concerns

School Location

Available Land
Cost
School Size (Enrollment Capacity)
Funding
Auxiliary Facilities
Accessibility

Land Use and Transportation

Future Growth
Open Space
Design/ Aesthetics
Environment
Health and Safety
Sense of Community
Infrastructure
Neighborhoods

Traffic Congestion
Addressing Common Concerns

Growth

Coordinated Planning

Infrastructure Demands

School Siting
What Can Communities Do?

Increase communication: understand what are concerns from local governments and ISDs.

Look for ways to assist each other toward common goals and share resources.

Create pilot programs: land banking/land acquisition partnerships.

Look for ways to combine funding or offer financial incentives to connect school location and infrastructure investment.

Continue discussions to incorporate future planning; City comprehensive plans and school long range plans should be coordinated.
**Possible Recommendations**

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<tr>
<th>Common Concern</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>• Remove bias in funding for new construction</td>
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<td>• Streamline the permitting process</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Identify funding sources and how to connect funding with shared goals</td>
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<td>• Land Banking, Developer set asides</td>
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<td>Health and Safety</td>
<td>• Institute a Safe Routes to School Program</td>
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<td>Sense of Community</td>
<td>• Authorize Joint Use Agreements</td>
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<td>Site Design and Infrastructure</td>
<td>• Full cost analysis for school construction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Future Growth</td>
<td>• Promote Intergovernmental Coordination</td>
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<td>• ISD participation in local land use planning, thoroughfare planning, capital improvements</td>
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Available Tools, Programs, and Funding Sources

Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)/Surface Transportation Program – Metropolitan Mobility (STP-MM) Funds

Examples: Intersection improvements, Signal retiming, Bike/Pedestrian projects, Bottle neck removals, etc.

Regional Toll Revenue
The 2007 RTR Funding Initiative made $2.5 billion in SH 121 toll proceeds available to fund transportation projects.
Sustainable Development Call for Projects had $41 million in planning and infrastructure projects.

Clean School Bus Program
Funding available to schools, ISDs, and school bus operators to reduce emissions from bus fleets.

TxDOT Programs (Safe Routes to School (SRTS), State Transportation Enhancement Program (STEP), etc.)
Next Steps for City of Denton and Denton ISD

Understand land use and transportation issues for City and ISD.

Know when to ask questions – understand the decision-making processes for the City and ISD.

Address short term traffic, safety, and accessibility concerns.

Develop a process for coordinated planning.

Communication:
- Who – Proper personnel
- What works, what doesn’t work
- Needs
- Data sharing
Next Steps for NCTCOG

Continue to promote coordination among ISDs and local governments.

Host workshops and invite speakers and other experts to address RTC and ISDs.

City of McKinney and MISD Pilot Project (model for the region):

- Outline and institutional structure/process for planning, coordination, and implementing land use and transportation initiatives
- Address local safety concerns
- Explore development deals and land banking
- Highlight best practices

Evaluate and track outcomes and best practices.
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NCTCOG Sustainable Development:
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