REGIONAL SCHOOL COORDINATION TASK FORCE MEETING

April 26, 2016

North Central Texas Council of Governments

Agenda

» Introductions and Task Force Overview

» Findings from Regional Interviews and Preliminary Research

» Improving Interagency Coordination: Ideas and Brainstorming

» EPA Smart School Siting Tool

» Announcements

Community Schools and Transportation
(TIGER Grant)

Encourage Interagency **Coordination**

Advance Long-term Planning for **School Siting**

Improve **Transportation Safety** Near Schools

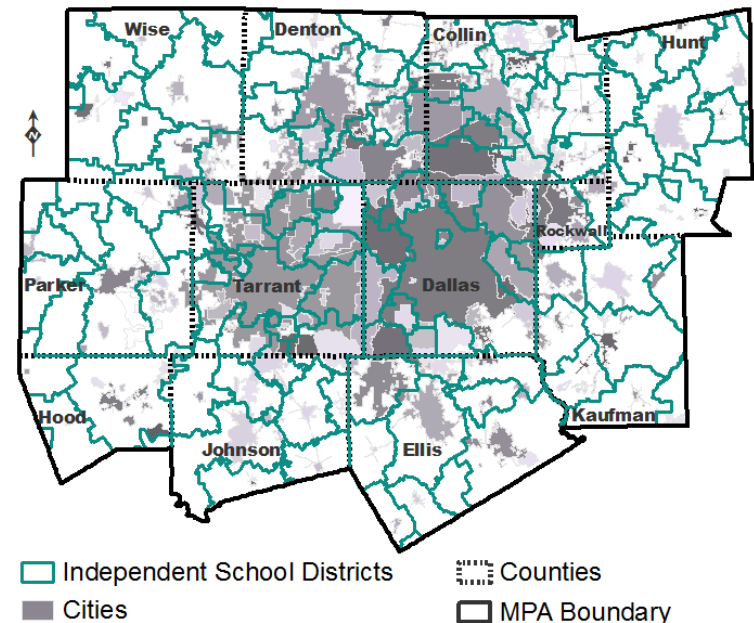Promote **Multimodal Transportation** Options to Schools

Interagency Coordination

» **Coordinate land use and transportation planning efforts**: ISD facility planning, city comprehensive plans, and capital improvement plans; school transportation, city thoroughfare planning, and regional transportation planning

→ **Regional School Coordination Task Force**

» **Remove policy barriers** to the development of sustainable schools

→ **Policy Workshops**

School Siting

» **State and local policies** related to school siting and land banking

» **Land banking programs** and best practices

» **Demographic projections**: ISD, city, and regional

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Policy Bundle + Guidebook

Transportation Safety

» **Safety audits** at pilot schools

Recommendations for pedestrian and bicycle safety around schools

» Bilingual **pedestrian and bicycle safety education program**, and transportation safety information guide

Multimodal Transportation

» **Public transit – school bus** coordination

» Pilot project analyses of **alternative transportation** connections, and ways to alleviate **traffic congestion**

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Recommendations, Tools, and Resources

Findings from Regional Interviews and Preliminary Research

» Five cities, five school districts, and three consultants

» Purpose: fact-finding, provide a baseline for future discussions and development of resources

» Questions/answers related to the following topic areas:

1. Interagency Coordination
2. School Siting
3. Transportation – Traffic Congestion
4. Transportation – Busing
5. Transportation – Walking, Biking, Safe Routes to School
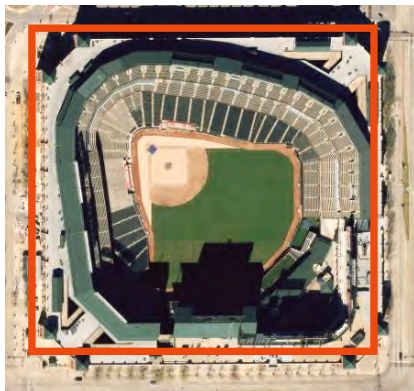6. Charter and Magnet Schools

School Siting

» Top Considerations: where the kids are, and size of parcel

» All ISDs had unofficial acreage standards. Ranges:

Elementary: 8 - 15 acres

Middle: 20 - 33 acres

High: 40 - 75 acres

50 acres: TCU Campus

15 acres: Globe Life Ballpark

School Siting (cont.)

» Several ISDs are building two-story elementary schools for the first time because of limited land availability

Image courtesy HP ISD and Stantec

What's Working Well:

» Meeting with city staff and architecture/ engineering consultants early in the site selection process

Areas of Improvement:

» Making sure everyone's at the table

Resulting Products: School Siting Guidebook

Transportation - Traffic Congestion

» Traffic congestion was a top issue in every interview (City and ISD)

» Fewer kids are walking and biking than in the past, even when schools are located in neighborhoods

» Older schools were not designed to handle increased traffic

What's Working Well:

» Separating buses, vehicles, and walking/biking

» Road access from two or more sides of school

Areas of Improvement:

» Working with City/County/TxDOT frequently during site selection and development to mitigate traffic impacts

Resulting Products: Pilot case studies of traffic congestion/flow → Recommendations for existing and future schools

Transportation - Busing

» ISDs have to cover substantial portion of student busing costs (≈75%), which can equate to millions of dollars every year (depending on district size)

What's Working Well:

» Joining with other school districts to provide busing (e.g., Dallas County Schools) can help reduce costs

Areas of Improvement:

» Coordination with transit agencies

» Hazardous Route Busing – consider adopting a policy, or strengthening criteria of existing policy

Resulting Products: Recommendations for improving coordination with transit agencies

Transportation - Walking, Biking, SRTS

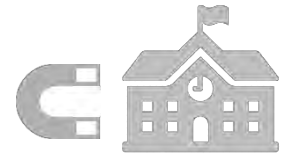**What's Working Well:**

» Providing sidewalks on school site

Areas of Improvement:

» Ensure pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and connectivity in surrounding neighborhoods

» Be consistent in applying policies that require sidewalks for all new developments (no exceptions)

» Identify safe routes to school

» Security measures and enforcement

Resulting Products: Safety/walking audits → Recommendations for bicycle and pedestrian safety around schools

Charter and Magnet Schools

» Changing educational needs have led to more charter and magnet schools → transportation challenges (more busing, regional impacts on the transportation system)

What's Working Well:

» Reusing existing facilities

» Requiring Specific Use Permits (SUP) for new charter schools – allows City to be proactive in dealing with traffic impacts

Areas of Improvement:

» Encourage charter and magnet schools to locate near transit stations where applicable

Resulting Products: TBD

Interagency Coordination

» Meeting frequency ranged from monthly to quarterly to as-needed.

What's Working Well:

» <u>Fast-Growing Communities</u>: monthly meetings to discuss future school facilities and current operational issues

» <u>Maturing Communities</u>: quarterly meetings to discuss demographic trends, new developments, safety issues, joint facilities, etc.

» <u>ISD Staff</u>: operations/facilities, transportation, safety/security, etc.

» <u>City Staff</u>: transportation, planning, parks and rec., police, etc.

Areas of Improvement:

» Consistent point staff person(s) that interact with ISDs or City

» Institutional structure to sustain long-term coordination (if key personnel leave – what will happen?)

Resulting Products: Policy Bundles

Improving Interagency Coordination: Ideas and Brainstorming

Policy Bundles

» Created as part of 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 an offset of the required local funding match in transportation projects

» Two school-related policies: (with associated action type)

1. **School Siting Coordination** (Governing Body Approval)

2. **Safe Access to Schools** (Joint Staff Coordination)

Policy Bundles

School Siting Coordination – Governing Body Approval

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.

Safe Access to Schools – Joint Staff Coordination

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.

What Does This Coordination Look Like?
(Breakout Exercise)

Break out into small groups, and answer the following questions:

» **Why** should we coordinate? (purpose, benefits)

» **Who** should be involved? (agencies, positions)

» **How often** should we meet?

» **What** should we meet on? (SRTS, school siting, traffic, safety, etc.)

» **Where** will we meet?

» **Before/After** – what goes into preparing for a meeting and the follow-up (agenda, handouts, meeting notes, etc.)

EPA Smart School Siting Tool

www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-school-siting-tool

EPA Smart School Siting Tool

The tool is designed to…

» Engage a more diverse group of stakeholders

» Encourage more holistic analysis of opportunities and impacts

» Foster and facilitate collaboration

» Support (not supplant) community decision-making

School Siting Timeline

| Prepare | Identify need | Evaluate options | Select site |

Assessment & Planning Workbook

Resource to help communities prepare for siting decisions by assessing coordination between school siting and other planning processes

Site Comparison Workbook

Resource to help communities compare and evaluate school siting alternatives, including renovation, expansion, and new construction

Part 1: Assessment and Planning Workbook

» Helps communities understand how well their school siting process is coordinated with land use and other community planning processes, and develop an action plan to improve coordination

» Intended to be used before a community begins the process to site a specific school

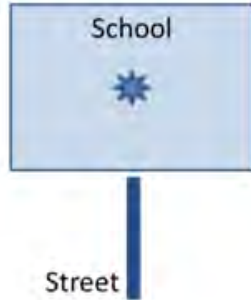| 1.a.iii Comprehensive Plan/Growth Plan/General Plan The purpose of the following questions is to assess how well the community comprehensive or growth plan is aligned with school facility planning. These questions should be answered by the local government planning department.	Yes	To some extent	Unclear	No	Not Applicable	Answer Later	Description
Enhanced planning and coordination							
Does the comprehensive plan address school siting?	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Did the school agency participate directly in the development of the most recent community comprehensive plan?	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Does the community comprehensive plan explicitly designate areas for schools in the future land use section of the plan, including future land use map(s)?	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Does the comprehensive plan require upgraded and well-connected pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure near schools or on prominent routes to schools?	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Does the comprehensive plan provide for more compact development or mixed income housing near schools?	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Does the comprehensive plan include strategies for working with local school agencies to identify and secure sites for school facilities?	○	○	○	○	○	○	

Part 2: Site Comparison Workbook

» Helps to compare two or more candidate school sites
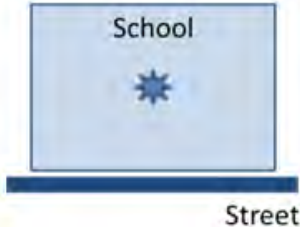
» Comparison Factors:

- Proximity to students and population centers
- Location in the community
- Beneficial site characteristics
- Connectivity with the neighborhood
- Bike and pedestrian accessibility
- One-time capital and recurring annual costs

Select the scenario that most closely represents the school site:

○ One street, dead-ending at the school site.

School

Street

○ One street, adjacent to the school site.

School

Street

○ Two or more streets, adjacent to the school site.

School

Streets

Worksheet 7: Capital Cost Calculator

Capital costs are one-time costs associated with site acquisition, site preparation, and design and construction of the school and its supporting infrastructure.

Capital Cost Consideration	Description	One-time Cost Borne By:				Cost Cannot Yet Be Quantified
		Local Government	Local School Agency	Developers	To be Determined	
Real estate acquisition						
Site preparation						
School renovation or expansion (including mitigating deferred maintenance)						
New school construction						
Provision of excess classroom capacity during construction						
Road upgrades (within 6 blocks of school)						
New roads						
New lanes						
Pavement reconstruction, resurfacing						
Curb cuts						
Bus pullouts						
Traffic calming, curb extensions						
Driveways						
Parking lots						
Pedestrian crossings						

Coordination with EPA

» Current pilot in Ohio. Looking to add DFW

» Training options (Regional Scale / Local Level)

» Possible test locations

Announcements

» **April 27** (1pm): Webinar - Using the Tool: Smart School Siting Workshop. www.ofcc.ohio.gov

» **May 4**: National Bike to School Day. www.walkbiketoschool.org

» **May 6** (11:30am): Webinar - Solar for Independent School Districts. www.gosolarnorthtexas.org

» **May 31**: Healthiest Cities and Counties Challenge proposals due. www.healthiestcities.org

» **June 9 and 10**: Complete Streets Workshops

» **July 26**: **Next Regional School Coordination Task Force Meeting!**

Announcements (cont.)

» Webinar – EPA Smart School Siting Tool (focused on Texas): date TBD

» EPA is coming to North Texas to conduct pilot case studies of the School Siting Tool

   → Let us know if your community would like to be one of them!

» NCTCOG staff will be conducting pilot case study analyses: bicycle/pedestrian safety, transportation connections, and traffic congestion around schools

   → Let us know if any schools in your community would benefit from one of these analyses

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