

TxDOT Bicycle Hearing

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1. Hello, I am Julie Anderson, and I want to thank you for being here today. I am a Senior Transportation Planner, with the Sustainable Development Team in the Transportation Department of the North Central Texas Council of Governments. Our Team at the Council of Governments oversees active transportation planning for the 12-county Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Planning area.
 - Today I will provide a brief overview of trails and on-street bikeway planning for our metropolitan area, and I will also highlight several regionally significant trail corridors that are in various stages of planning, engineering design and construction. Each of these trails include a partnership for implementation by the Council of Governments, local communities and TxDOT.
2. MPO
 - The Council of Governments serves as the transportation planning organization for the 12-county Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan planning area, which is one of 23 located around the state of Texas, with more than 420 metropolitan planning organizations around the country.
 - Our planning area in Texas is represented on this slide.
3. Our 12-county planning area is split by three TxDOT districts as reflected on this map, including a portion of the Fort Worth District in the west and Dallas District in the east. Hunt County is part of the TxDOT Paris District.
 - The TxDOT hearing today includes the western and eastern subregions displayed on the map.
4. NCTCOG's planning area encompasses more than 200 cities, ranging from rural towns to urban areas. In addition to the two largest cities of Dallas and Fort Worth there are 13 other cities with more than 100,000 residents.
 - In 2020, our population was estimated to be 7.6 million residents
 - By 2045 our population across the 12-county region will grow by nearly 4 million additional residents to nearly 11.4 million.

As a regional planning organization, NCTCOG works collaboratively with, but does not make decisions for, individual municipalities and agencies. TxDOT, cities, and counties manage construction projects. Local Government's also make land use decisions and school districts make school siting decisions.

5. The COVID 19 pandemic had significant impact on transportation in 2020 leading to significant decreases in the travel volumes of nearly every mode of transportation including personal vehicles, public transit, and commercial airlines. However walking and bicycling travel on trails in the Dallas-Fort Worth region experienced significant increases in 2020 compared to 2019.
 - As shown on this slide, in 2020 the significant increases began early in the year before COVID shelter in place restrictions occurred, and steadily increased later in the year with a dramatic peak of a more than 70% increase during the months of April and May.
6. Now, two and a half years out from Covid-19, trail usage in the region is still mostly up in the region from the baseline of 2019. Although it is evident that Texans do not like riding in the hot summer months.
7. The next series of slides identify trails and on-street bikeways identified in the metropolitan transportation plan adopted by the Regional Transportation Council. This Plan serves as the guide for investing in transportation infrastructure across our planning area.
 - Displayed on this slide is the Regional Veloweb network of over 2,100 miles of trails existing, funded, and planned trails
 - The Regional Veloweb are prioritized trail alignments intended to provide connections between cities and counties in the region.
 - The map identifies the regional network in various stages of development.
8. The map on this slide identifies Community Shared Use Paths with an additional 3,000+ miles of trails in various stages of development. These trail corridors are more local in nature and tend to be located in suburban communities that are experiencing new growth in previously undeveloped areas. These trails provide connections to the Regional Veloweb network.
9. The slide identifies on-street bikeways in various stages of development by local communities based on their adopted plans. More than 2,600 miles of these facilities are identified in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, typically consisting of bikeways such as on-street striped bike lanes.
10. All together the Combined network of Regional Veloweb, Community Paths, and On-street Bikeways will result in more than 8,600 miles of facilities. About 1,800 miles exist today or are funded, however almost 80% of this total combined network is still in the planning stage and expected to be completed by 2045.
11. In addition to the regional trails and bikeway network, there is a Statewide Network of bikeways identified by TxDOT's Bicycle Tourism Trails Study and represented on this slide.

- Of note on this map are several trails of regional significance that extend through our Dallas – Fort Worth metropolitan area and will one day provide connections to major cities around the state and to neighboring states.
12. One regional trail corridor I will highlight is located in western Fort Worth and is known as the Bomber Spur Trail, which is a rails to trails project.
 13. Preliminary Engineering for a portion of this trail was completed earlier this year from Vickery Blvd near the intersection of SH 183 on the south to Calmont Ave which is located just south of Interstate 30.
 - Ultimately when this trail is complete, it will form a large trail loop combined with the West Fork Trinity Trail and the Clear Fork Trinity trail connecting residents in western Fort Worth To downtown.
 14. Preliminary engineering was completed for a 3.1 mile stretch of this trail, which provided design schematics, opinions of construction costs, and identified locations for bridges and safety measures at roadway crossings.
 - This engineering effort was a partnership by the COG, City of Fort Worth and Streams & Valleys.
 - The Regional Transportation Council approved funding to construct this first phase of the trail, which will include a new trail bridge over US377.
 - As a result, the TxDOT Fort Worth District will be coordinating with the City of Fort Worth to implement this trail construction project.
 15. The next regionally significant trail I will highlight is the Cotton Belt Regional Trail, in orange on this map. This is a corridor stretching 55 miles from near Downtown Fort Worth, through the mid cities in Tarrant County, northern Dallas County, and into southern Plano in Collin County.
 16. This slide identifies the number of cities, counties, and rail transit stations that will ultimately be connected by the Cotton Belt Trail.
 - The City of Grapevine and TxDOT are currently completing construction on a section of the trail near downtown Grapevine, and has engineering design underway for the next phase heading eastward along the TexRail corridor toward DFW Airport.
 - Also of note is the Dallas Area Rapid Transit currently has engineering design underway for nearly 24 miles of the Cotton Belt Trail that will be implemented in phases from DFW Airport to Shiloh Station in Plano. Sections of that trail alignment are anticipated to open with the Silver Line Commuter Rail project and ultimately connect with 9 rail stations managed by DART.

17. Another significant trail corridor in the region extends from Downtown Denton to Downtown Dallas, the green trail on this map. This is a nearly 52 mile trail alignment and provides connections to numerous rail stations, historic downtowns, and major employment centers in Denton County and Dallas County.
18. This slide identifies the trail alignment that connects many cities across the two counties including nearby connections to rail stations along DCTA and DART rail networks.
 - IN 2020 preliminary engineering was completed for an 8-mile stretch of the trail corridor from the DCTA Hebron Station in southern Lewisville to the Champion Trail near the border of Coppell and Irving.
 - The Regional Transportation Council recently awarded funding for construction of the trail section in southern Lewisville connecting to Carrollton. As a result this project will be implemented by the City in collaboration with the TxDOT Dallas District.
19. The last regional corridor to be highlighted today is the Fort Worth to Dallas Regional Trail which extends nearly 66 miles from downtown Fort Worth to Downtown Dallas, in blue on this map.
20. This trail corridor extends through five cities in Tarrant and Dallas Counties. Of the 66 miles, 50 miles are complete right now with 13 miles of the trail currently funded for construction. Those 13 mile trail sections are expected to be complete and open by late 2023. Both the Fort Worth and Dallas TxDOT Districts are coordinating with the cities on these construction phases. Through a regional trail naming process including all the local cities along the trail, it was recently named the “DFW Discovery Trail.”
21. As noted on this slide, the trail through the 5 cities is a long-term vision that is finally becoming reality. This regional trail has been included in the metropolitan transportation plan since 1996.
22. For more information about these trail corridors and much more, please visit our web site at NCTCOG.org/Veloweb. On that page you can click on the link to view more information about these regional trail corridors. There is also a link to an online map where you can view the entire regional network adopted as part of the metropolitan transportation plan.
23. We also want to make communities aware of TxDOT’s upcoming Transportation Alternatives Call for Projects. Local governments can apply for funding for active transportation projects in their community. More information can be found on TxDOT’s website.
24. With that, I would like to thank you all for your time today and if you have any questions about this information, feel free to reach out to myself or any member of our active transportation planning team at the Council of Governments. Our contact information is located on this slide. Thank you.



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