

Trails and Bikeways Planning and Implementation in North Texas

North Central Texas Council of Governments

VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING SCRIPT

Thursday, May 6, 2021 to Friday, May 21, 2021

SLIDE 1 - Introduction Slide

Hello, I am Kevin Kokes, and I want to thank you for being here today. I am a program manager 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 bicycle and pedestrian facilities across the twelve-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 includes a partnership for implementation by the Council of Governments, local communities and TxDOT.

SLIDE 2 – Texas Metropolitan Planning Organizations

The Council of Governments serves as the transportation planning organization for the twelve-county Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan planning area, which is one of 25 located around the state of Texas, there are more than 420 metropolitan planning organizations around the country.

The map on this slide identifies the location of our Dallas-Fort Worth planning area, located within the state.

SLIDE 3 – North Central Texas Council of Governments

This slide identifies how our region is divided between three TxDOT districts. The Fort Worth TxDOT District is located on the west, the Dallas District is located on the east, and Hunt County is included within the Paris District.

Today’s public hearing for TxDOT includes the Western and Eastern Subregions for the Fort Worth and Dallas Districts.

SLIDE 4 – North Central Texas Council of Governments

The Council of Governments 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 population.

In 2020, our population across the region was estimated to be 7.6 million residents. By 2045, our population across the region is expected to grow by nearly 4 million additional residents, to over 11.2 million people.

As a regional planning organization, the Council of Governments works collaboratively with, but does not make decisions for, individual municipalities and

agencies. TxDOT, cities, and counties manage construction projects, also local governments make land use decisions and school districts make school siting decisions.

SLIDE 5 – Monthly Trail Usage

The COVID-19 pandemic had significant impact on transportation in 2020, leading to a significant decrease in the travel volumes of nearly every mode of transportation including personal vehicles, rail and bus transit, and commercial airlines. However, walking and bicycling travel on trails in the Dallas-Fort Worth region experienced significant increases in 2020 when 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 then steadily increased later in the year with a dramatic peak of increase in trail usage of more than 70% during the months of April and May.

Strong increases in trail usage occurred throughout the remaining months of 2020.

SLIDE 6 – Regional Veloweb

The next series of slides identify trails and on-street bikeways included 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.

This slide identifies the Regional Veloweb network of nearly 1,900 miles of trails.

These are prioritized trails intended to provide connections between cities and counties across the region.

This map identifies the regional network, which is in various stages of development, of either existing, funded, or planned facilities.

SLIDE 7 – Community Shared-Use Paths

The map on this slide identifies Community Shared Use Paths with nearly 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.

SLIDE 8 – On-Street Bikeway Network

The map on this slide identifies on-street bikeways in various stages of development by local communities based on their adopted master plans. More than 2,400 miles of these facilities are identified in the plan, typically consisting of bikeways such as on-street striped bike lanes.

SLIDE 9 – Combined Regional Veloweb, Community Paths, and On-Street Bikeway Network

All together the combined network of Regional Veloweb, Community Paths, and

On-street Bikeways will result more than 7,300 miles of facilities. About 1,500 miles exist today, however about 80% of this total combined network is still in the planning stage and is expected to be completed by 2045.

SLIDE 10 – TxDOT’s Bicycle Tourism Trails Study

In addition to the regional trails and bikeway network, there is also a statewide network of bikeways identified by TxDOT’s Bicycle Tourism Trails Study and represented on this slide. Bonnie Sherman highlights this statewide network in her presentation about bicycle planning across the state of Texas.

Of note on this slide are several trail corridors 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.

SLIDE 11 – Ellis County (Midlothian-Waxahachie Regional Trail)

Okay, so now what you all have been waiting for, and that is the highlights of several regional trail corridors that are under various stages of development in our region. The first corridor that I will highlight is located in Ellis County, and is a corridor that will stretch from Midlothian to Waxahachie.

SLIDE 12 – Ellis County (Midlothian-Waxahachie Regional Trail)

Recently, the Council of Governments, in partnership with the cities of Midlothian and Waxahachie completed preliminary engineering for the nearly 10-mile alignment that will stretch between the two cities.

The map on this slide identifies the sections of the trail that will be completed within in each city's jurisdiction.

In April of this year, federal transportation funding was approved by the Regional Transportation Council for the first two phases of construction of this trail. A northern phase will begin in Midlothian and extend southward from Midlothian Parkway. A southern phase will connect at Getzendarner Park in Waxahachie and extend north to FM 875.

The TxDOT Dallas District will be coordinating with both cities on these trail construction projects.

SLIDE 13 – Fort Worth Bomber Spur Trail

The next 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.

SLIDE 14 – Fort Worth Bomber Spur Trail

Preliminary engineering for a portion of this trail corridor was completed earlier this year from Vickery Boulevard near the intersection of SH 183 on the south, northward to Calmont Avenue, which is located just south of Interstate 30.

Ultimately when this entire Bomber Spur corridor 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.

SLIDE 15 – Fort Worth Bomber Spur Trail

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 Council of Governments, City of Fort Worth, and Streams & Valleys.

This past month, the Regional Transportation Council approved funding to construct this first phase of trail from Calmont Avenue on the north to Camp Bowie/US377 which will include a new trail bridge over that roadway. As a result, the TxDOT Fort Worth District will be coordinating with the City of Fort Worth to implement this section of trail for construction.

SLIDE 16 – Cotton Belt Regional Trail

The next regionally significant trail I will highlight is the Cotton Belt Regional Trail. This is a corridor stretching nearly 55 miles from near downtown Fort Worth, through the mid cities in Tarrant County, through northern Dallas County, and into southern Plano in Collin County.

SLIDE 17 – Cotton Belt Regional Trail

This slide identifies the number of cities, counties, and rail transit stations that will ultimately be connected by the entire Cotton Belt Trail corridor.

Currently, the City of Grapevine and TxDOT are completing construction on a section of the trail near downtown Grapevine and has engineering design underway for the next phase of the trail heading eastward along the TexRail corridor leading into DFW Airport.

Also of note is the Dallas Area Rapid Transit Agency currently has engineering design underway for nearly 24 miles of the Cotton Belt Trail that ultimately implement 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 nine rail stations managed by DART.

SLIDE 18 – Denton to Dallas Regional Veloweb Trail

Another significant trail corridor in the region extends from downtown Denton to downtown Dallas. This is a nearly 52-mile trail alignment as identified on this map, and provides connections to numerous rail stations, historic downtowns, and major employment centers in Denton County and Dallas County.

SLIDE 19 – Denton to Dallas Regional Veloweb Trail

This slide identifies the trail alignment that connects with many cities across the two counties including nearby connections to rail stations in the DCTA and DART rail networks.

This past year, preliminary engineering was completed on an eight-mile stretch of

the trail corridor from the DCTA Hebron Station in southern Lewisville extending to the Campion 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.

SLIDE 20 – Fort Worth to Dallas Regional Veloweb Trail

The last regional corridor to be highlighted today is the Fort Worth to Dallas Regional Trail which extends nearly 66 miles in total from downtown Fort Worth to downtown Dallas.

SLIDE 21 – Fort Worth to Dallas Regional Veloweb Trail

This trail corridor extends through five cities in Tarrant and Dallas counties, with nearly 13 miles of the trail funded for construction. These sections of the trail are expected to be complete and open by late 2023. Both the Fort Worth and Dallas TxDOT Districts are coordinating with the cities in this corridor for construction on these phases.

SLIDE 22 – Regional Collaboration

As noted on this slide, the trail through the five cities is a long-term vision that is finally becoming reality. This trail has been included in the Metropolitan

Transportation Plan since 1996.

SLIDE 23 – Trail Branding

An upcoming effort that will begin by summer of 2021 involves the development of a unified trail name and branding for effort this regional trail corridor. The five cities and the Council of Governments are coordinating this trail branding effort, with the goal to have signage installed by the time the entire trail opens in late 2023. This slide identifies examples of what this branding and signage may look like.

SLIDE 24 – Regional Network

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 the online map where you can view the entire regional network adopted as part of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

SLIDE 25 – Trails and Bikeways in Google Maps

Lastly, another great resource for locating existing trails in the region or planning a trip using trails and bikeways is through Google Maps. This slide identifies two options for locating trails and planning a trip.

You can click on the “Bicycling” mode of transportation in the menu bar and use

the search feature, or you can navigate through the map.

SLIDE 26 – Contact Information

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 and have a great day.
