Pedestrian Transportation provides an opportunity for the region to meet vital air quality, mobility, and quality-of-life goals through the planning and implementation of pedestrian-friendly developments, roadways, and neighborhoods.

The Metroplex is walking. Pedestrian activity is increasingly the key to retail dollars, attracting tenants to office parks, creating neighborhood cohesion, and establishing successful entertainment districts. At the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), transportation planning and programming includes efforts directed at improving pedestrian mobility, particularly around transit stations.

Basic Pedestrian Statistics

- Over 37,000 Metroplex employees walk to work each day.
- 78 percent of the region’s 200,000 plus transit riders first access the bus or rail system by foot each day.
- 5.5 percent of all trips in the region, for any purpose, are made by walking or bicycling.

The region’s air quality, mobility, and financial constraints demand innovative solutions. Under the Regional Transportation Council’s Sustainable Development Strategy, NCTCOG is seeking to leverage the transportation land use connection for air quality benefits. On-road mobile sources account for 50 percent of the region’s nitrogen oxide emissions, a prime cause of ozone pollution. The average per person number of vehicle miles traveled is, of course, a crucial factor in the amount of those emissions. Thus, policies and infrastructure that serve to reduce the average vehicle miles traveled are central to the region’s Sustainable Development Strategy. Making the region more pedestrian-friendly and providing the public support necessary for pedestrian and transit-oriented development to be successful are crucial to the success of the region’s rail system and as a part of the region’s overall air quality plans. This report examines pedestrian transportation in seven parts – A Place for the Pedestrian; Healthy Communities and Lifestyles; Walking, Transit, and Economic Development; The Future of Pedestrian Facilities; Planning and Development for Pedestrians; The Pedestrian Tool Box; and Pedestrian Access.
Understanding the needs of pedestrians and the factors that affect pedestrian travel is important when designing pedestrian facilities and predicting travel mode choices. Pedestrian needs and the opportunities for walking are diverse. The main issue with pedestrian facilities is not the sidewalk facility alone, but the total pedestrian experience. The Pedestrian Environment Factor is a composite measure of the pedestrian environment, a means of evaluating and quantifying pedestrian friendliness. As the graph below shows, there is an observed relationship between a good pedestrian environment and lower vehicle miles traveled. The Pedestrian Environment Factor quantifies the relative convenience, safety, and walking effort perceived by pedestrians by evaluating four elements:

- **Ease of Street Crossings:** Key intersections in a highly pedestrian-friendly zone are characterized by clearly marked and signalized crosswalks, medians and right-turn lanes with refuge islands, and frequently controlled intersections.

- **Sidewalk Continuity:** This factor relies primarily on how complete and continuous the sidewalk system is within the area in question. Primary among these are continuous sidewalks along high-volume facilities and transit routes.

- **Street Layout:** The street layout measures whether or not one can travel from point A to point B along a path that is relatively close to the straight line distance between point A and point B. A grid system generally allows pedestrians to keep travel times to a minimum because streets connect, block lengths are short, and dead-ends or cul-de-sacs are less frequent.

- **Topography:** Good news for this region is that there are very few natural topographic barriers. Weather also has an obvious impact on pedestrian activity, and in Texas, the creation of shade for the pedestrian can mitigate the impact of a sunny summer day.

These characteristics must be present to support a successful pedestrian and/or transit-oriented community. Research indicates that areas ranking high in these attributes experience much higher levels of non-motorized travel.

This research concludes that transforming a pedestrian-hostile neighborhood into one that is pedestrian-friendly could result in a 10 percent reduction in vehicle miles traveled per household. Communities achieving a high Pedestrian Environment Factor can benefit from decreased congestion, lower pollution, and the increased sense of community that accompany pedestrian-friendly developments. The following examples show the high contrast in pedestrian environments in our region.

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The grid pattern along Swiss Avenue in Dallas provides an excellent framework for pedestrian travel.

Continuous sidewalks, short blocks, and easy crossings characterize this pocket pedestrian zone in Southlake.

Long blocks, no sidewalk, and poor crossings characterize this arterial street.

These curvilinear street patterns common in new suburban areas hinder pedestrian life.
Healthy Communities and Healthy Lifestyles

Demonstrated Health Benefits of Walking

The foundation of a healthy lifestyle is integrating moderate exercise into regular daily activities. Providing pedestrian facilities and a pedestrian-friendly environment allows individuals to integrate a healthy, active travel mode into everyday life.

The American Medical Association’s Council on Scientific Affairs has stated, “Walking is a most convenient and adaptable form of exercise,” and health experts agree that regular, moderate exercise like walking can:

- Reduce the risk of developing heart disease
- Alleviate depression
- Increase endurance, sense of balance, flexibility, and muscular strength
- Decrease the risk of developing diabetes
- Alleviate lower back pain
- Improve coronary circulation
- Reduce the risk of developing hypertension
- Help reduce high blood pressure
- Help control weight
- Reduce feelings of anxiety and stress
- Curb decreases in bone density
- Decrease the risk of developing some types of cancer
- Reduce risks of disability and premature death

A 1996 American Heart Association Statement urges physicians to advocate walking as a mode of exercise. It summarized findings from over 100 published studies and concluded that the training effect of regularly performed activities, such as brisk walking, was greatest at moderate to above average intensities, but that even low- to moderate-intensity activities performed daily can have some long-term health benefits.

Additionally, the authors of research published in 1999 write that, “Our results show that sedentary but otherwise healthy individuals can make significant improvements in physical activity, cardiorespiratory fitness, and cardiovascular disease risk factors without having to go to a fitness center and perform high-intensity workouts. For sedentary persons whose barriers to physical activity may include lack of time, dislike of vigorous exercise, or lack of access to facilities, this is good news.”

One goal of a pedestrian-friendly city is to allow individuals to take advantage of the health benefits of walking. One regional goal, as adopted by the Regional Transportation Council in Mobility 2025 Update, is to “encourage transportation investments that promote healthy and active lifestyles.” Walking to work, shopping sites, school, or mass transit facilities can be an easy way for Metroplex residents to get in their daily exercise and help clean up the air. However, as one health expert observes, “Even an activity as simple as walking depends upon the availability of safe and attractive places to walk. Physical activity needs to become not just the right choice, but an easy, sustainable, and enjoyable choice.”

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Community Health and Pedestrian Activity

Walking does not just improve the health of the individual, it also impacts the health of the community. Pedestrians make one-on-one connections with their neighbors and make a tangible connection between home, neighborhood, and destination. Neighbors are able to meet and interact on foot and to sink roots in a community and marketplace.

The lack of pedestrian connections and the absence of shared spaces discourages local interactions and a neighborhood or market sense of place.

This street type is common in the Metroplex and hinders the option of walking for even simple trips such as visiting playmates and neighbors.

Upstairs tenants are guaranteed patrons as retailers and residents form a cohesive neighborhood in the Uptown area of Dallas.

This street type provides the option for pedestrian trips within and outside the neighborhood.
Walking, Transit, and Economic Development

Transit and walking are modes of travel that complement one another and together support a specific style of economic development typically referred to as transit-oriented development. Pedestrian travel is generally limited by trip distance, and transit is limited by the ease of access to destinations at the transit stop. Providing transit linkages from pedestrian origins to popular destinations can increase the use of walking as a transportation mode. A catchment area, the area from which primary ridership is drawn, typically does not exceed a half-mile radius. This distance represents a 5-to-10 minute walk, generally considered a maximum acceptable walking distance between trip origins and transit stops. Coordinating transit and walking services creates a growth opportunity for both modes and increases the development zone around transit stations.

Currently, 5.5 percent of the region’s trips are made by walking and bicycling, and nearly 78 percent of transit riders begin their trips as pedestrians. New investments in light rail, commuter rail, and other transit facilities have already placed a greater burden on pedestrian facilities around these stations. The development community capitalizes on concentrations of pedestrians wherever they are to be found. Individuals seek out destinations for shopping, living, and working that provide a diverse and interesting pedestrian experience. Providing pedestrian access to transit and considering pedestrian needs at transit malls and transit stops can encourage use of each of these forms of transportation.

Development and Walking

• An Urban Land study of actual home sales in pedestrian-friendly areas classified as Traditional Neighborhood Developments identified that buyers were willing to pay an average 11 percent premium for the opportunity to live in areas that are walkable, mixed use, and compact with high-quality public spaces.
• $4.3 billion in U.S. Development financing is in new Traditional Neighborhood Development projects.
• Through 2000, approximately $1 billion in private funds has been invested in development within walking distance from DART’s $860 million, 20-mile Light Rail Starter System.

Pedestrian access to and from the Mockingbird light rail station has been a key element for development projects surrounding the station.

Three Key Principles:

• Keep walking distances short,
• Make walking safe and secure, and
• Make walking comfortable and attractive.
This transit mall near Dallas’ West End provides a pedestrian-oriented linkage between residential, employment, and entertainment uses, as well as a nearby rail station and bus transfer center.

Transit Malls

Transit malls are created by removing automobile and truck access on sections of existing streets, usually on principal urban networks; only buses, bicycles, taxis, or light rail are allowed into the mall, and parking is prohibited. A transit mall functions as a linkage between activities along a corridor, and is most successful in places where there is a diversity of uses and significant ridership sources nearby. The design typically includes aesthetic and functional streetscape improvements, including security features, a well-planned layout, shelters, shade, sitting areas, quality paving, litter and cigarette receptacles, and landscaping.

Transit-Oriented Developments

Transit-oriented developments are mixed-use communities or neighborhoods surrounding a transit station, stop, or route that are designed to encourage transit use and pedestrian activity. They are usually developed with sufficient density in terms of: residents or employees per acre, number of trips serviceable by transit, mix of uses within walking distance of one another, and pedestrian-oriented design characteristics. Transit-oriented developments are often referred to as Traditional Neighborhood Developments because of the resemblance to older trolley car communities. Planning for and centering development around transit can provide social, economic, and environmental benefits. These investments in public transit enable cities to use market forces to build up densities near stations where most services are located, thus creating more efficient sub-centers and minimizing local infrastructure costs by focusing development in transit corridor areas.

These site plans, developed by the Congress for the New Urbanism, portray how higher density, mixed land use around transit stations can boost ridership, encourage pedestrian activity, and promote economic development.
Facility Planning

Mobility 2025 Update: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan established an aggressive program for pedestrian transportation. NCTCOG’s Regional Transportation Council’s goal for pedestrian travel is to mainstream planning, programming, construction, and actual use of pedestrian facilities within the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Obstacles to improving pedestrian safety and mobility include:

1. the current infrastructure available to pedestrians in the Metroplex,
2. the lack of end-of-trip facilities including pedestrian access to buildings and showers and changing facilities at businesses.

To overcome these obstacles, Mobility 2025 Update initiated the Pedestrian Transportation Project. The purpose of this project is to identify options for expanding and improving the service area of pedestrian facilities in the region. There are three primary elements to this effort: Transit Station Pedestrian Districts, Local Initiative Pedestrian Transportation Districts, and the Regional Veloweb. A Pedestrian District, whether or not it is anchored by a rail station, includes the following design elements:

- Concentrated system of pedestrian facilities
- Easy access to transit services
- Pedestrian-oriented design
- Sidewalks and Crosswalks
- Commuter changing facilities

One key to implementing workable Pedestrian Transportation Districts is local commitment to the project. For this reason, Local Initiative Pedestrian Transportation Districts and Transit Station Pedestrian Districts are recommended for implementation in this region. Both of these are developed and proposed at the local level. They may be centered around a large employment center, a major educational institution, a historic district or, of course, transit stations. To function properly, either type of pedestrian district must provide a range of services for pedestrians such as sidewalks, crosswalks, shade, waiting areas, and end-of-trip facilities such as showers and lockers.

The Regional Veloweb is also a key component of the pedestrian system. These off-street trails are planned to form an interconnected network for non-motorized transportation on separated rights-of-way in the region. Veloweb routes are 12-foot-wide concrete paths which serve to link residents with major activity centers and are often grade separated at roadway intersections.

To encourage the development and implementation of pedestrian facilities, the Plan also recommends an aggressive effort through the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Task Force to assist local sponsors in developing Local Initiative Pedestrian Transportation Districts, Transit Station Pedestrian Districts, and Veloweb Projects. Potential pedestrian districts were identified in Mobility 2025 Update by their Pedestrian Needs Index Score, a gauge of potential demand based on population and employment density, income, and transit use.

### Local Initiative Pedestrian Transportation Districts in Mobility 2025

- Central Dallas
- Central Fort Worth
- Uptown – Dallas
- Greater Love Field
- Central Expressway
- Lower Greenville
- Greater Addison Circle
- Southside – Fort Worth
- LBJ/Stemmons
- North Central Expressway
- Harry Hines
- Irving/Las Colinas
- Greater Cedars
- Cultural District – Fort Worth
- Townview – Dallas
- Central Denton
- Greater Fair Park
- Central Plano
- Central Arlington
- Central Garland
- Central Grand Prairie
- Oak Cliff
- Redbird
- Fort Worth Town Center
- Carswell
- Stockyards
- Texas Weslyan
- Central Grapevine
Funding for Pedestrian Facilities

Between the years 2000 and 2025, $145 million of funding through the Transit Enhancements Set-Aside; the Statewide Transportation Enhancement Reimbursement Program; the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program and other federal, state, and local programs is forecast for pedestrian improvements in the region. An additional $418 million is needed to complete the regional Veloweb. While this is a substantial investment, the contribution of the development community in building sidewalks as part of the construction process is immeasurably important to the success of the region’s pedestrian strategies. Local government commitment to the private development of pedestrian facilities is a key facet of the partnership required to create the region’s pedestrian infrastructure.

Recommended Pedestrian Policies

Finally, Mobility 2025 Update recommends the following steps to increase the service area of pedestrian facilities:

- End or strongly curtail the use of waivers to sidewalk construction requirements during the development process.
- Construct sidewalks as a routine part of roadway construction and reconstruction, with the funding of the sidewalk coming from (a) the roadway funds or (b) an assessment on the adjacent landowner.
- Build sidewalks within 1/4 mile of existing or future transit facilities as part of rail and bus capital improvements.
- Incorporate Pedestrian Transportation Districts in local planning documents to provide for (a) increased densities, (b) mixed land uses, (c) pedestrian-oriented building design, and (d) complete pedestrian infrastructure.
Planning and Development for Pedestrians

A proactive approach to pedestrian travel calls for incorporating the pedestrian into the planning, development, construction, and maintenance of both private and public spaces. The toolbox available to the government and private developers covers both macro issues — how an area becomes a pedestrian center and how the overall pedestrian system functions — and micro issues — the safety and security of pedestrians and the quality of the walking space. In general, the macro issues create the desire to walk to a destination, while the micro issues invite walking or make a pedestrian trip possible.

While some elements of each fall neatly in the hand of either the public or private sector, many are shared responsibilities, and it is an effective, cohesive blend of all these elements that is crucial to the success of a pedestrian activity center. The Site Review Checklist for Pedestrian Facilities — adapted from the United States Department of Transportation’s Planning, Design, and Maintenance of Pedestrian Facilities — highlights these issues and how local governments and developers can work together on each.

Addison Circle, seen here in 2001, is a successful mixed-use development located adjacent to the Dallas North Tollway and a DART transit station. It features 350,000 square feet of office space, a hotel, 125,000 square feet of retail space, and 3,000 housing units in a well-designed, compact neighborhood sprinkled with pocket parks, short blocks, traffic calming, and pleasing public spaces.

Vibrant downtown street life offers a stark contrast to sidewalks along many suburban arterials where high traffic speeds and broad crossing distances at intersections can create safety hazards and discourage pedestrian travel.
Site Review Checklist for Pedestrian Facilities

Development Style:
- Is the density reasonable for pedestrian connections?
- Are there diverse land uses and services within walking distances?
- Is the development oriented to transit services?
- Are block lengths suitable for pedestrians?

Pedestrian System:
- Are both utilitarian and recreational walking considered in the plan?
- Are utilitarian paths direct? Do they provide for connections to existing pedestrian magnets nearby?
- Do recreational pathways take advantage of unique site features? Are they generally visible from homes or other buildings?
- Does the pedestrian system consider the type and probable locations of future development on adjacent or nearby parcels of land? Is there flexibility to provide direct connections to adjacent parcels, should that be desired later?
- Are pedestrian entrances clearly evident through either design features, topography, signing, or marking?
- Are walkways along the street separated and buffered from traffic as much as possible?

Safety and Security:
- Are crossings of wide expanses of parking lots held to a minimum?
- Are pathways generally visible from nearby buildings and free from dark, narrow passageways?
- Is lighting adequate for nighttime security?
- Are sight distances adequate for motorists to see pedestrians at intersections and other places where people are likely to enter the roadway?
- Do pathways lead to the safest crossing points?
- Are pedestrian/vehicle conflicts kept to a minimum?
- Is there adequate time at pedestrian traffic signals?

Walking Surfaces and Amenities:
- Are the walking surfaces skid-resistant and sloped for drainage?
- Are provisions made for curb ramps and are they properly designed?
- Are major changes in grade properly treated with stairways and handrails?
- Are sidewalks widened and are there landing pads at bus loading and unloading zones?
- Are there trees, public art, and interesting ground floor building fronts?

This sidewalk in University Park makes effective use of street furniture and landscaping, inviting pedestrians from the adjacent residential and educational areas to stop and dine.

Pedestrian-friendly Sundance Square in Fort Worth is a long-standing, public-private partnership that combines many positive elements of pedestrian planning and development.
Pedestrian Facilities Maintenance

Sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities must be maintained if they are to be effective and long-lasting. The degree of maintenance performed on pedestrian facilities has a direct impact on the facility effectiveness, service life, level of use, liability risk, and community image. While the benefits of maintenance activities such as painting exposed steel or refurbishing pavement markings may be readily apparent, the benefits of regular maintenance that reduces liability, maximizes usage, and enhances community image may not be as obvious, and may, therefore, be neglected.

Vandalized facilities, broken light fixtures, graffiti, and crumbling sidewalks create the impression of an unsafe location. The result is often a decrease in facility usage with a possible increase in pedestrian accidents due to the use of alternative, less safe routes. Furthermore, the Americans with Disabilities Act requires municipalities to modify their sidewalk inventories to comply with particular accessibility specifications, and, for most municipalities, meeting Americans with Disabilities Act requirements calls for extensive, ongoing sidewalk rehabilitation/replacement programs.

The primary concerns in maintenance of pedestrian facilities are to keep the original design concepts intact, to carry out periodic refurbishing, and to remove debris, snow, mud, and water. A periodic maintenance and inspection schedule should be established to help ensure notice and repair of deficient elements. Without such a program, a municipality will likely not be able to prove due diligence in preventing sidewalk breakdowns.

Sidewalk Management Programs

Because many municipalities are without an effective sidewalk management system, repair is often done on an ad hoc basis with inspections performed loosely and without well defined guidelines. A proactive management approach, one that manages facilities and infrastructure rather than responds to problems, should link facility data, geographic representation of projects, and scheduling and financial information. Automating the inventory, inspection, data collection, analysis, maintenance, and scheduling processes supplies a number of benefits:

- Minimizes costly failures and increases the general condition level within the constraints of a limited budget,
- Provides data when working on pedestrian issues with the development community,
- Provides justification for maintenance and repair needs and budget requirements,
- Provides managers with reliable infrastructure condition information and budget requirements,
- Protects the city from liability claims, and
- Provides tools for evaluating different budget scenarios on facility conditions and backlogged maintenance repairs.

Pedestrian transportation needs are often evidenced by “volunteer paths,” like this crossing over I.H. 30.
Pedestrian Level of Service

Similar to both traditional vehicle level of service and bicycle level of service, pedestrian level of service (PLOS) is a quantitative rating of a pedestrian facility that can be used for sizing pedestrian spaces. Pedestrian level of service is a volume to capacity rating from PLOS A (free flow) to PLOS F (gridlock). PLOS C is the recommended design standard.

Some basic sidewalk sizing criteria to follow include:

- One pedestrian requires 2.5 feet of effective sidewalk width.
- Sidewalk capacity maximum is 25 pedestrians per foot of width per minute.
- PLOS C equals 10 pedestrians per foot of width per minute.

A quick methodology for calculating needed width has just four steps:

1. Estimate future pedestrian volume in pedestrians per minute. For example, 150 pedestrians per minute might file out of a light rail stop.

2. Set the desired PLOS and associated flow rate. For example, 10 pedestrians per foot of width per minute.

3. Divide the volume by the goal flow to determine the needed effective sidewalk width. For example, 150/10 = 15 feet.

4. Add width as needed for waiting areas, clearances, street furniture, window shopping, utility poles, or other obstacles or pedestrian activities.

What to expect on a sidewalk

- Delivery services with dollies
- Wheelchairs
- Pedestrians leaving transit stops
- Double-wide strollers
- Elderly assisted by walkers or canes
- Children walking dogs
- Scooters
- In-line skaters
- Children on bicycles
- Joggers
- People walking to work, school, or transit

Sidewalks serve a wide variety of community and mobility needs, including many trips - like these in Fort Worth and Denton - that cannot safely occur anywhere else on the transportation system.
Pedestrian Access

Whether for recreation, exercise, visiting neighbors, walking through a parking lot, or commuting to work, everyone is a pedestrian sometime, somewhere. While the transit dependent, children, and the elderly are key pedestrian groups, the central criteria in pedestrian standards and accessibility is disabled access. To make pedestrian facilities universal and usable for literally everyone, the Americans with Disabilities Act set design criteria which must be applied to all pedestrian facilities.

The bottom line to design constraints is safety. Each year, approximately 70 pedestrians are killed in North Central Texas. Over 40 percent of these fatalities are children. Among metropolitan areas with a population of one million or greater, the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Statistical Area ranks 10th highest in the nation for the absolute number of pedestrian fatalities. Texas ranks 10th in the nation for the highest child pedestrian death or serious injury rate. Approximately 70 percent of pedestrian fatalities are due to crossing, turning and merging activities, making careful attention to intersections and crossings key to improving pedestrian safety.

Pedestrian systems and facilities need to be safe to encourage actual use by pedestrians. While education and awareness campaigns can do much to increase pedestrian safety, the record indicates that placing a greater emphasis on structural prevention strategies has more impact.

Recommended resources include:

- Traditional Neighborhood Development: Street Design Guidelines, Institute of Transportation Planning.

Summary of Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Requirements

- Three feet clear width absolute minimum; five feet width desirable minimum for accessible.
- Elimination of obstacles within the accessible route of travel.
- Five feet wide passing areas every 200 feet on accessible routes less than five feet in width.
- Maximum 1:20 (five percent) grade is desirable; steeper grades up to 1:12 (8.33 percent) can be provided with ramps.
- Level landing areas, five feet in length for every 30 inches of elevation change along 1:12 (8.33 percent) grade (ramp).

This intersection lacks two important features: 1) wheelchair ramps for handicap access, and
2) a crosswalk to assist pedestrians crossing. Crosswalks alert motorists to the presence of pedestrians; they also provide a defined space that encourages pedestrian usage.

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What Is NCTCOG?
The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is a voluntary association of local governments within the 16-county North Central Texas region. The agency was established in 1966 to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development. North Central Texas is a 16-county region with a population of 4.9 million and an area of approximately 12,800 square miles. NCTCOG has 232 member governments, including all 16 counties, 163 cities, 26 independent school districts, and 27 special districts.

Since 1974, NCTCOG has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area. The Regional Transportation Council is the policy body for the Metropolitan Planning Organization. The Regional Transportation Council consists of 37 members, predominantly local elected officials, overseeing the regional transportation planning process. NCTCOG’s Department of Transportation is responsible for support and staff assistance to the Regional Transportation Council and its technical committees, which comprise the MPO policy-making structure.

Regional Mobility Initiatives Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Transportation Management</td>
<td>March 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Quality</td>
<td>July 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Congestion</td>
<td>October 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multimodal Solutions in the North Central Corridor</td>
<td>July 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toll Roads</td>
<td>February 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Investment Studies</td>
<td>August 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century</td>
<td>October 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes</td>
<td>December 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility Initiatives for the 21st Century (video)</td>
<td>April 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Demand Forecasting Procedures</td>
<td>June 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuter Traffic</td>
<td>December 2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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