

## **Topic of the Month: National Bike Month**

The North Central Texas Council of Governments is gearing up to celebrate National Bike Month this May. Created by the League of American Bicyclists, this annual observance promotes the numerous perks of cycling. From physical activity to reducing traffic congestion, cycling offers significant benefits for both your personal wellbeing and the wellbeing of our environment.

### **Benefits of bicycle riding**

Bicycling has long been known as an excellent form of exercise. It's a low-impact activity – gentle on your joints while still providing a comprehensive workout. Regular cycling strengthens your heart and lungs, improving blood circulation and reducing the risk of cardiovascular disorders, such as high-blood pressure and heart disease.

Other health-related benefits of cycling on a regular basis include weight management, improved muscle strength and mental wellbeing.

Bicycling is also a means of transportation. Travel by bicycle is a cost-efficient way to address mobility and air quality concerns while improving physical health and quality of life. Choosing two wheels over four can make a positive impact on the environment.

Bicycles produce zero greenhouse emissions, contributing to cleaner air. Likewise, more people commuting on bikes means fewer people in cars – and less traffic congestion. Bicycle transportation also helps lessen noise pollution and the need for fossil fuels and parking infrastructure.

### **North Texas trails network**

The Dallas-Fort Worth region boasts an impressive network of nearly 1,100 miles of existing trails, with significant expansion underway thanks to dedicated funding. These pathways offer ample opportunities to commute, exercise or just enjoy a breezy ride. Discover more about the current and planned bicycle trails across the region on NCTCOG's [DFW Trails webpage](#).

In urban and suburban areas, designated on-street bikeways such as bike lanes enhance safe and accessible bicycle travel, serving as links within residential areas, workplaces, schools and transportation hubs. Currently, approximately 45 locally adopted master plans incorporate on-street bikeway facilities, representing nearly 2,500 miles in various phases of development. For more information, visit [NCTCOG's on-street bikeways webpage](#).

**Here are some regional trails currently open or in the works:**

**Cotton Belt Trail:** When completed, this nearly 57-mile regional trail corridor will provide a bicycle-pedestrian connection between Plano and Fort Worth. Currently, 21.5 miles of the trail are complete, primarily between North Richland Hills and Grapevine along the Trinity Metro TEXRail corridor. In April 2025 construction was initiated by Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) for an additional 11 miles of the trail from Addison to Plano along the Silver Line commuter rail. The current and future trail segments provide access to rail stations, major employment centers, several parks and green spaces, and other major destinations. For more information, visit NCTCOG's [Cotton Belt trail page](#).

**DFW Discovery Trail:** Since 2013, NCTCOG has been working with five cities – Fort Worth, Dallas, Grand Prairie, Arlington and Irving – to implement a 63-mile continuous trail alignment that will connect downtown Dallas to downtown Fort Worth. Currently more than 60 miles of the trail is existing or funded for construction. Significant progress was made in 2023 with the completion of a Trail Branding and Wayfinding Initiative, in which recommendations were made for trail branding, wayfinding system design and trail infrastructure. Construction continues to advance on several sections of the trail, with most of the trail alignment expected to be completed by 2028. For more information, visit [NCTCOG's DFW Discovery Trail page](#).

**Katy Trail:** What was once an abandoned railroad is now the most heavily used trail in North Texas. The trail runs 3.5 miles from the American Airlines Center in Dallas to DART's light rail Mockingbird Station near SMU. For more information, visit the [Katy Trail's website](#).

**River Legacy Park:** Arlington's 1,300-acre park includes eight miles of paved trails generally along the West Fork Trinity River winding through greenbelts and thick forests, perfect for cyclists of all skill levels. The park also offers an additional 10 miles of unpaved mountain biking trails. For more information, visit [River Legacy Park's website](#).

**Trinity Trails:** Wherever you go in Fort Worth, you're likely to be near a branch of the expansive Trinity Trails. In total, the Trinity Trails offer more than 100 miles of trails along the Trinity River and its tributaries. For more information, visit [Trinity Trails' website](#).

## **Bike safety**

Since 2015, NCTCOG has promoted the **Look Out Texans**, bike, walk, drive safely campaign that encourages North Texans to watch out for one another. Learn your rights and responsibilities when walking, biking, or driving and encourage your neighbors, friends, and family to do so as well. Safety education kits are also available to teachers and parents seeking resources for bike safety instruction for children and students. Together, we can make our streets safer for everyone! For more information, visit the [Look Out Texans website](#).