

ACCESS NORTH TEXAS

REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PLAN
FOR NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS

Prepared by the North Central Texas Council of Governments

Final March 2018



What is NCTCOG?

The North Central Texas Council of Governments is a voluntary association of cities, counties, school districts, and special districts which was established in January 1966 to assist local governments in **planning** for common needs, **cooperating** for mutual benefit, and **coordinating** for sound regional development.

It serves a 16-county metropolitan region centered around the two urban centers of Dallas and Fort Worth. Currently the Council has **236 members**, including 16 counties, 168 cities, 24 independent school districts, and 28 special districts. The area of the region is approximately **12,800 square miles**, which is larger than nine states, and the population of the region is about **7 million** which is larger than 38 states.

NCTCOG's structure is relatively simple; each member government appoints a voting representative from the governing body. These voting representatives make up the **General Assembly** which annually elects a 17-member Executive Board. The **Executive Board** is supported by policy development, technical advisory, and study committees, as well as a professional staff of 350.



NCTCOG's offices are located in Arlington in the Centerpoint Two Building at 616 Six Flags Drive (approximately one-half mile south of the main entrance to Six Flags Over Texas).

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NCTCOG's Department of Transportation

Since 1974 NCTCOG has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation for the Dallas-Fort Worth area. NCTCOG's Department of Transportation is responsible for the regional planning process for all modes of transportation. The department provides technical support and staff assistance to the Regional Transportation Council and its technical committees, which compose the MPO policy-making structure. In addition, the department provides technical assistance to the local governments of North Central Texas in planning, coordinating, and implementing transportation decisions.

Prepared in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation and the U. S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, and Federal Transit Administration.

"The contents of this report reflect the views of the authors who are responsible for the opinions, findings, and conclusions presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, or the Texas Department of Transportation."

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RESOLUTION ENDORSING ACCESS NORTH TEXAS, THE COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT-HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS

WHEREAS, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is a Texas political subdivision and non-profit corporation organized and operating under Texas Local Government Code Chapter 391 as the regional planning commission for the 16-county North Central Texas region; and,

WHEREAS, NCTCOG is a voluntary association of, by and for local governments established to assist in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development; and,

WHEREAS, NCTCOG has been designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area by the Governor of the State of Texas in accordance with federal law; and,

WHEREAS, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), comprised primarily of local elected officials, is the regional transportation policy body associated with NCTCOG, and has been and continues to be a forum for cooperative decisions on transportation; and,

WHEREAS, federal law, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, requires the establishment of a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan for agencies seeking funding under the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program; and,

WHEREAS, Chapter 461 of the Texas Transportation Code requires the development of a regional plan to coordinate public transportation services funded with federal, state, or local funds; and,

WHEREAS, the North Central Texas Council of Governments was designated as the lead agency to develop the coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan for the 16-county North Central Texas region; and,

WHEREAS, Subtask 3.05 of the FY2018 and FY2019 Unified Planning Work Program includes public transportation planning and management activities; and,

WHEREAS, Access North Texas was locally developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and other members of the public; and,

WHEREAS, Access North Texas was approved by the Regional Transportation Council on March 8, 2018.

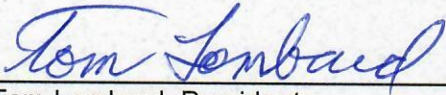
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED THAT:

Section 1. The North Central Texas Council of Governments Executive Board endorses Access North Texas.

Section 2. This resolution will be included in the final documentation of Access North Texas.

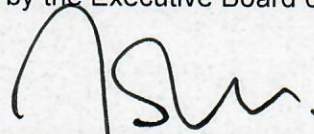
Section 3. Access North Texas will be transmitted to the Texas Department of Transportation and other impacted agencies.

Section 4. This resolution shall be in effect immediately upon its adoption.



Tom Lombard, President
North Central Texas Council of Governments
Councilmember, City of North Richland Hills

I hereby certify that this resolution was adopted by the Executive Board of the North Central Texas Council of Governments on March 22, 2018.



J.D. Clark, Secretary-Treasurer
North Central Texas Council of Governments
County Judge, Wise County

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Access North Texas is the public transit-human services transportation coordination plan for the 16 counties served by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). Access North Texas identifies the transportation needs of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. Based on a combination of research, technical analysis, and public input, the plan identifies strategies to better serve these vulnerable populations with public transportation. While the plan is not a funding document, it is used as a guide for agencies that provide transportation services when federal and State funding becomes available.

Older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes can have difficulty finding public transportation options that connect them to medical appointments, work opportunities and education or job training. This plan identifies where these transportation connections do not exist or could be improved in both the region as a whole as well as county-by-county.

NCTCOG is designated by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to develop the plan, but works to ensure all voices are heard through the entirety of the planning process. NCTCOG is responsible for organizing public meetings, collecting data, performing research, and bringing that knowledge together to create a plan for the region.

CURRENT TRENDS

Recent public transportation trends influence the evolution of traditional transit services across the region. Transit providers are ground-testing ways to

provide up-to-the-minute on-demand service, known as mobility on demand. In some areas, transit agencies are partnering with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), such as Uber and Lyft, to provide last-mile connections to supplement bus and rail service. Increasingly, cities and agencies contact transit providers to discuss how to provide transportation tailored to their community's particular needs and proactively work to improve available transit options. A significant factor in this trend is continuing intense economic growth in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex that has spurred the need for additional transportation services to connect residents to job opportunities. Lastly, technology and new smartphone apps are making it easier for customers to access multiple transit providers from one convenient source.

Future trends will also shape how seniors, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes use public transportation. Autonomous vehicles are currently being tested in the region and may become part of the transit system, changing the way last-mile and on-demand services are offered. Smartphone apps like GoPass (www.gopass.biz) will continue to integrate transit service information and make finding the right services and purchasing a fare convenient for riders. Future upgrades to this region-wide transit ticketing app will include more participating transit agencies and options for unbanked individuals to purchase tickets via local businesses that will accept cash. Lastly, TNCs are working to become more accessible for individuals with disabilities by improving components of their apps and increasing the number of accessible vehicles. These changes to the region's transit system will positively impact people's lives.

PROGRESS CONTINUES

Access North Texas was first adopted in 2013. Significant progress has been made in implementing recommendations from that plan. Examples of outcomes from the 2013 plan are described below. See Appendix B-1, Access North Texas (2013): Summary and Status, for more information about which strategies have been accomplished since the plan was adopted.

New Transit Service in Hutchins

The 2013 plan identified the need for municipalities in south and southeast Dallas County to obtain service for underserved areas and populations. The city of Hutchins didn't have any public transportation options, but residents needed to get around the community and FedEx needed to get their employees and drivers to their facility. STAR Transit was identified as a transit provider that could operate service to meet both FedEx and the city's needs. The city and FedEx both contribute funds to help pay for the operation of the service. STAR Transit now operates two shuttles that connect Hutchins residents to DART's light rail system, enable FedEx employees to get to the facility for early morning shifts, and enable residents to access local destinations such as grocery stores, schools, and medical facilities.

Denton Community Health Council

In Denton County, there was a need for a committee to focus on transportation needs to identify coordination opportunities and propose potential service changes. Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Denton has a Community Health Council that meets quarterly with internal departments, community organizations, and stakeholders in order to improve the wellness of their patients and reduce unnecessary readmissions. Improving wellness includes access to their facility via public transportation, so a transportation subcommittee was created. This committee focuses on how to improve transit connections to care facilities. Two public transportation providers are actively involved, providing information about available transit services and assistance to organizations and patients as they

apply for transit services. Additionally, the two transit agencies correspond on a regular basis to ensure they're coordinating transit services when possible. This model of collaboration within the community and between transit providers makes discussing and developing transit solutions easier.

Connecting Seniors to Medical Services

In Ellis County, public outreach in Access North Texas identified the need to expand or introduce new transportation options that connect residents to Dallas for medical services. For seniors living in Ellis County, it can be difficult and expensive to reach medical appointments in Dallas. Senior Connect's mission is to improve the quality of life for seniors and they partnered with STAR Transit to provide reduced-fare transportation for residents 60 and older (who don't qualify for Medicaid) in Ellis County, Kaufman County, and Rockwall County that have medical appointments in Dallas. This program provides an affordable and essential link to medical care.

Connecting Hunt County to Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)

A regional transportation link from Hunt County to the Dallas-Fort Worth area was needed to improve access to medical appointments, job opportunities and other destinations. Senior Center Resources and Public Transit operates The Connection, which provides public transportation in Hunt County. In October 2016, The Connection began operating a new commuter route connecting Greenville to DART's Downtown Rowlett Station, which is the terminus of the Blue Line in DART's light rail system. The new service follows a regular schedule with an affordable fare, replacing an occasional and expensive previous service. Now, there's a more affordable way for individuals to access medical appointments and job opportunities in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Cooperative Vehicle Procurement

Transportation providers within the 16-county region needed to increase the variety of vehicles in their fleet to better match vehicles to the service being provided.

In order to promote economies of scale that could benefit smaller transit providers, NCTCOG led a cooperative vehicle procurement in 2014 to obtain three different types of vehicles (small, medium, and light duty). In total, over 100 vehicles were procured for 9 different transit providers. This approach ensured federal procurement requirements were met, the vehicles were purchased at the best rate, and helped transit providers better match vehicle type to service provided. Pictured below is the Executive Director and Transportation Manager at Span Transit accepting one of their small duty vehicles.

SPAN TRANSIT DELIVERY VEHICLE

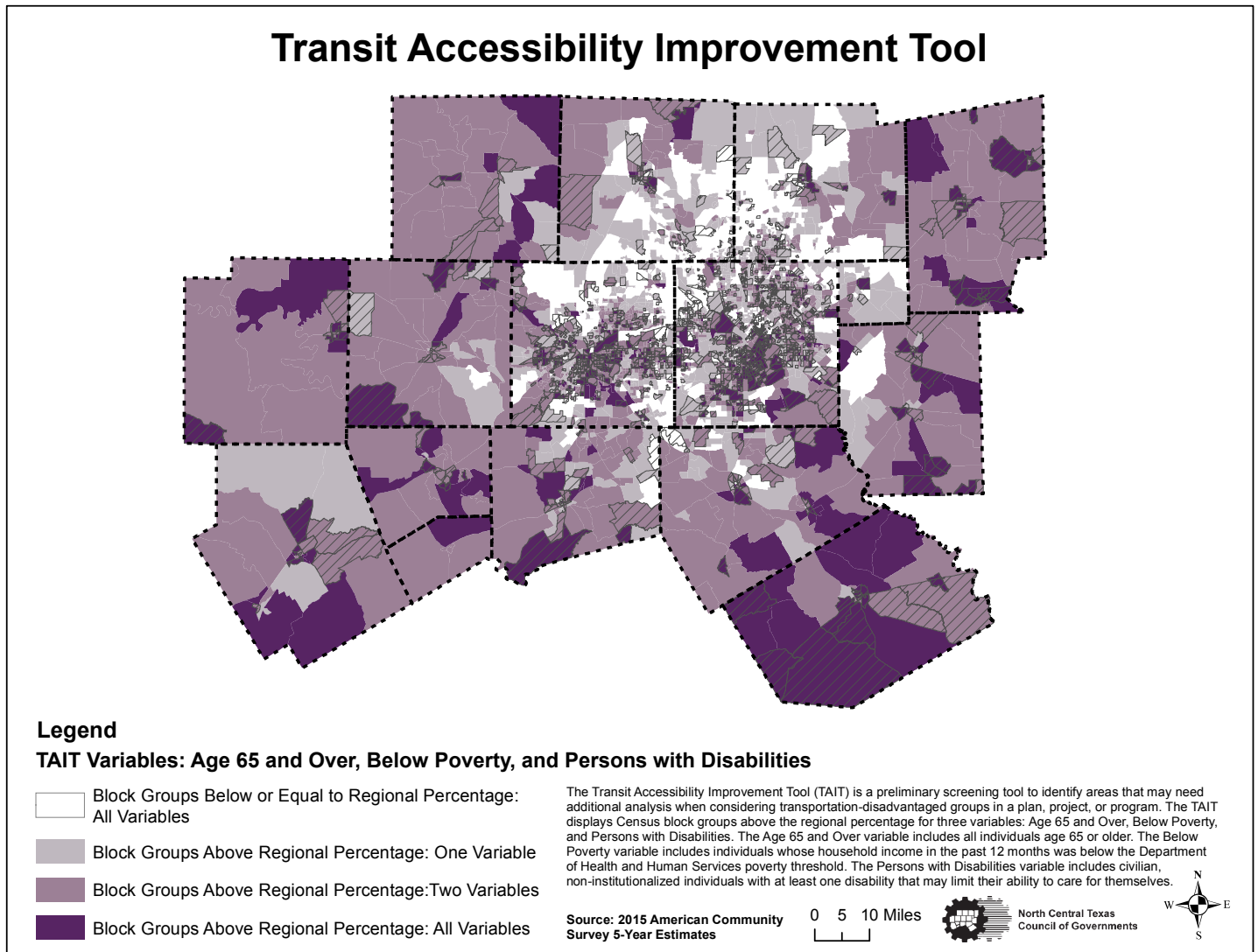


CURRENT NEEDS

The current plan update brought together many sources of information to identify current needs and describe strategies to meet those needs. Sources included demographic research, research on local conditions, a transportation poll for the public, outreach meetings, and consultation with regional stakeholders. All of the data (qualitative and quantitative) was used to evaluate the needs for public transportation in the 16-county region as a whole as well as for each county. The regional and county-specific strategies were developed based on all the data collected and described below.

U.S. Census data was collected and incorporated into a Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT). This tool was created to identify where populations that may have a greater need for access to public transportation are located in the 16-county North Central Texas region. The TAIT allows users to locate potential transit-dependent populations based on demographic traits. Transit planners can use the tool as a preliminary indicator of where service should be evaluated and to identify potential gaps in service. Since the geographic scale for the index is at the block group level, both local and regional planners can utilize the TAIT effectively for their area of interest. Populations included in this tool are older adults, individuals with disabilities, individuals with lower incomes, and

households without cars. The shaded regions indicate when one or more variables is greater than the regional percentage. The TAIT data is explored in detail in each county’s chapter following this Executive Summary.



TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENT TOOL POPULATIONS

Variable	Regional Percentage
Older Adults (65+)	9.99
Individuals with Disabilities	9.67
Individuals Below Poverty	14.51
Zero Car Households	5.14

To provide a basic understanding of gaps in service, staff also gathered information about the geography and eligibility requirements for current public transportation services. The data sheds light on where gaps in service exist either geographically or for certain populations. This information helped frame discussions at outreach meetings and conversations with stakeholders, and influenced the final strategies for the region as well as each county.

OUTREACH EFFORTS

Members of the public including older adults, people with disabilities, individuals with lower incomes, veterans and representatives of local government, transit agencies, workforce agencies and educational institutions participated in outreach meetings across the region. In total, 14 outreach meetings gathered 611 participants to share their thoughts on public transportation needs. In addition, staff followed up with 71 stakeholders representing populations with the greatest transportation needs to gain a deeper understanding of the needs and to prepare strategies that can address those needs.

Invitations to the outreach meetings were mailed and emailed to interested parties in each county, meeting announcements and information were also posted online, and information was shared with partner organizations to help promote the meetings through existing networks. During the meetings, staff gave a brief welcome and introduction to Access North Texas. Following this, an interactive keypad polling session took place to prompt discussion of transportation issues unique to each county. Based on the discussion, community members prioritized issues in each county to help inform strategies in this plan.

A transportation poll was also available online and in paper, and translated into English and Spanish. The poll collected first-hand data about public transportation in the region from both riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations. Polls completed by individuals reveal personal experiences with transportation challenges. Polls completed

by organizations on behalf of their clients illuminate issues seen by client advocates. Both forms of the poll provide personal views of the transportation environment in the region. A total of 1,081 complete polls were returned. Information collected through the poll informed both regional and county strategies. The distribution of poll responses can be seen in the map below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The regional strategies below identify and prioritize ways to address public transportation needs across the 16-county region.

Regional Strategies for Coordinated Public Transportation

Regional Strategy 1 In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit

Regional Strategy 2 Continue and expand projects that have a no-wrong-door approach to accessing transit or information about available transit

Regional Strategy 3 Create partnerships to simplify regional trips and reduce the number of transfers between providers

Regional Strategy 4 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

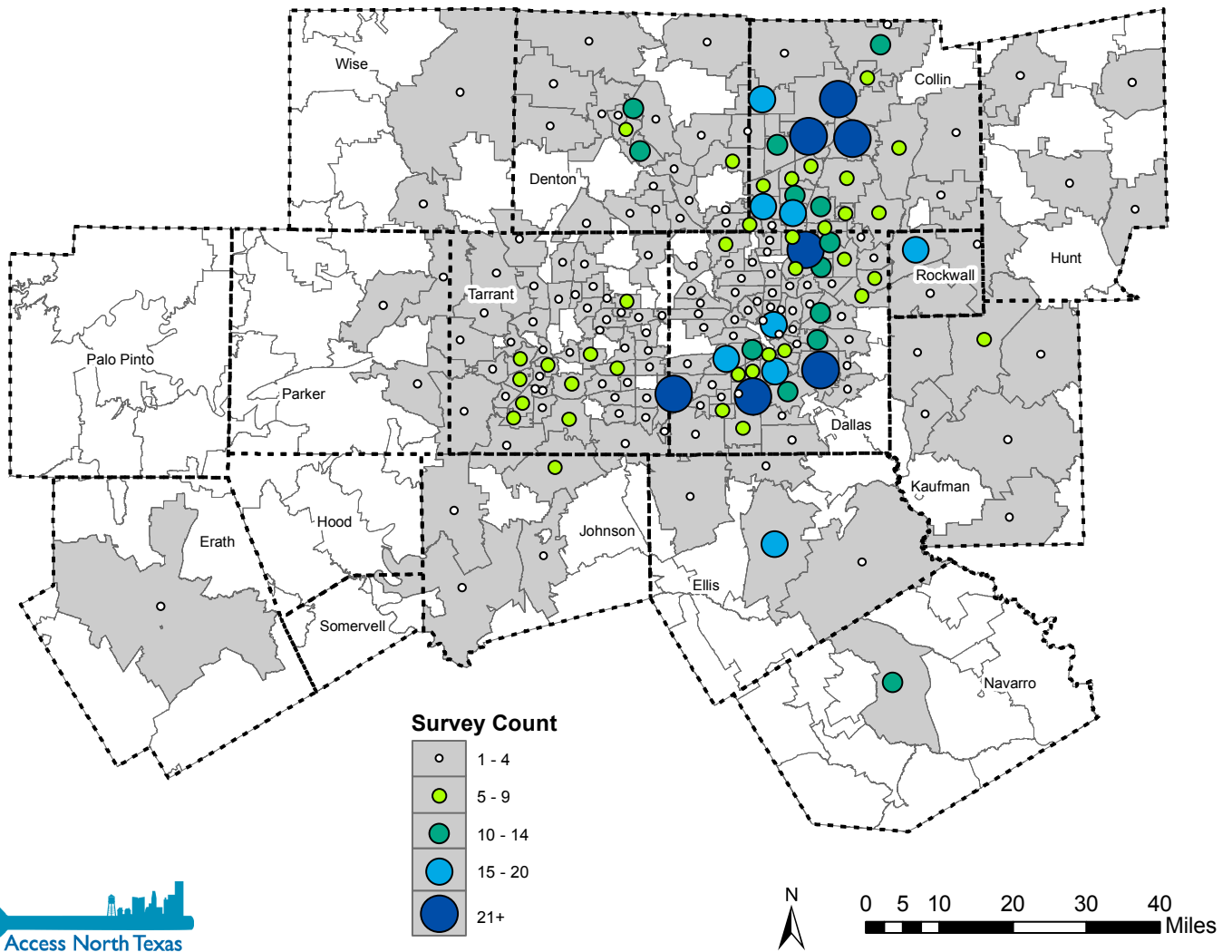
Regional Strategy 5 Work towards uniform, regional fares to simplify and reduce the cost of regional trips for riders

Regional Strategy 6 Advocate to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Regional Strategy 7 Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate non-traditional ways to deliver public transportation service, including partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, and transportation network companies

Regional Strategy 8 Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or busi-

Distribution of Access North Texas Stakeholder Poll Responses January - July 2017



ness leaders) to promote and support public transit through leadership, policy, or funding initiatives

In addition to the regional strategies listed here, specific county strategies are identified within each county chapter.

Implementing the Plan

Transportation providers and local stakeholders will collaborate to determine next steps, form needed partnerships, identify and pursue funding, and ultimately implement selected strategies. Organizations that want to implement a strategy listed in this plan will need to develop strong partnerships with trans-

portation providers, stakeholder agencies, communities, and counties. NCTCOG staff is available to help organizations identify potential partners and coordination opportunities. Organizations should also identify potential funding sources, which can be a mix of private and public funds, including funds from local, state, and federal sources. Local funds from public and private sources are important to demonstrate a community or organizational commitment to implementing specific strategies. Local funds are especially important to leverage state and federal dollars. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and NCTCOG have regular calls for projects to award

federal funds that support projects and strategies listed in this plan.

Characteristics of a highly competitive project:

- Is multi-year. A three year request is recommended for projects providing transit service;
- Identifies an existing public transit provider or existing non-profit transportation provider when proposing to provide transit service;
- Targets individuals with lower incomes for requests of Urbanized Area Formula Program (Job Access/Reverse Commute projects) funds;
- Targets older adults and individuals with disabilities for requests of Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds; and
- Supports one or more strategies outlined in this plan.

If a project is funded through NCTCOG or TxDOT, staff will document the project funding in the Transportation Improvement Program, coordinate necessary approvals, develop contract agreements, and work with implementing agencies to manage the project and all compliance activities associated with federal or state funding.

COLLIN COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to improve public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. These populations can have difficulty finding public transportation options that connect them to doctor's appointments, work opportunities and education or job training. This plan identifies where these transportation connections do not exist or could be improved within Collin County. This chapter will give an overview of the planning process, research conducted and collected, the public outreach meeting, the transportation poll used to collect personal input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Collin County.

PROCESS

This plan is required by federal guidance to be updated every four years. The plan must be developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors; individuals with disabilities; representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation; human services providers and other members of the public. The plan is updated to address current public transportation needs of the residents of Collin County. Through the process and methods described, prioritized strategies were developed so that future public transportation projects can be implemented when federal and State funding becomes available. Two different types of research were conducted during this plan update: data-based and people-based.

Data-based research included obtaining, reviewing, and analyzing Census data; using Census data to develop a mapping tool to identify locations where transit-dependent individuals may live; and identi-

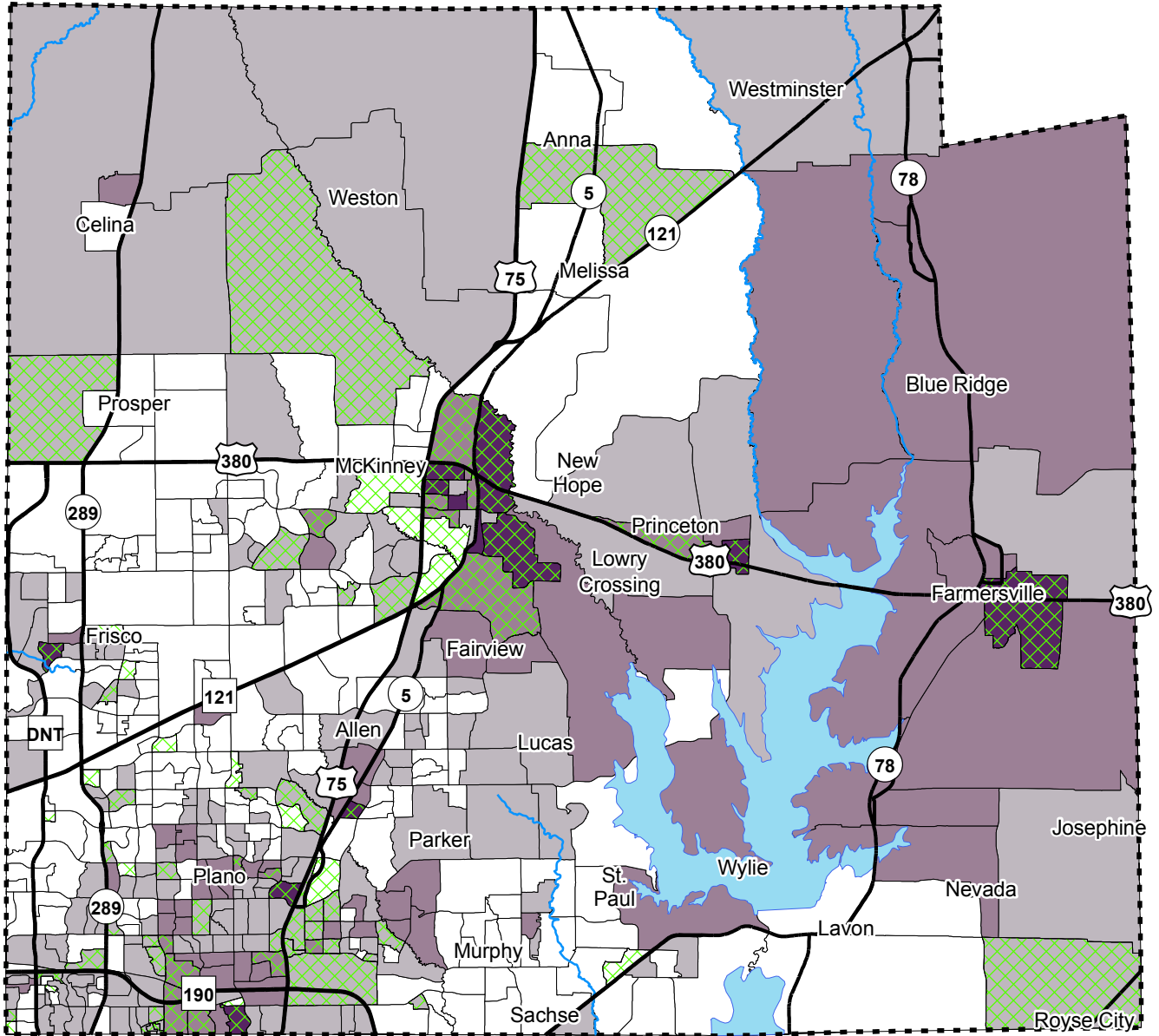
fying existing public transportation providers. The people-based research included reaching out to communities, organizations, and individuals to obtain feedback about the existing public transportation system and how it could be improved. Feedback was obtained through a public outreach meeting and a transportation poll. Stakeholders prioritized concerns about transit access.

RESEARCH

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

The TAIT was developed to identify locations with certain demographic factors that may indicate a greater need for public transportation. The populations of individuals over age 65, residents below the poverty line, and persons with disabilities were each compared to the regional percentage of the population in that demographic. A map was created based on areas that were above the regional percentage in zero, one, two, or all three of the demographic categories. The more categories that an area is deemed above the regional percentage, the more likely it is that area is to need transit. Zero car households was provided as a supplemental layer to identify households above the regional percentage that do not have a working vehicle available. The tool is useful in identifying groups of people who could benefit from transit services, but is not intended to be the deciding factor in decisions regarding public transportation. In Collin County there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentages. The areas within the county where the three variables are all above the regional percentage are east of US 75 in McKinney, north of

Collin County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



0 2.5 5 Miles



Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

- All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
- One Variable Above Regional Percentage
- Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
- All Variables Above Regional Percentage
- Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



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US 380 in Princeton, along US 380 in eastern Farmersville, along US 75 in Plano, near the Dallas North Tollway in Frisco, and near the intersection of SH 5 and US 75 in Allen. All but two census block groups with all three variables above the regional percentage are also above the regional percentage for zero car households. Central, eastern, and southeastern Collin County are areas with two variables above the regional percentage. Areas around and including Blue Ridge along SH 78 and north of US 380 in Farmersville are areas with age 65 and over and persons with disabilities above the regional percentage. South of US 380 near Farmersville, and in the Wylie and Nevada areas, the two variables greater than the regional percentage are age 65 and over and below the poverty line. Census block groups in Plano with two variables above the regional percentage typically are persons age 65 and older and persons with disabilities. Most census block groups with a single variable higher than the regional percentage are home to age 65 and older residents, with some areas of higher than regional percentage of persons with disabilities. Areas that are at or below the regional percentage for each category are predominantly in western Collin County, including much of Frisco, Prosper, southern Collin County near Lavon, Murphy, and Sachse; and rural parts of north Collin County. Zero car households above the regional percentage in the county are found in McKinney along the US 380, SH 5, and US 75 intersections, south of Anna and north of Melissa, along the US 75 and US 380 corridors, southwest of Weston, and west of SH 289 in Prosper.

Additional Demographic and Commuter Information

Collin County continues to experience a significant amount of growth. According to the American Community Survey's 2015 5-year estimates, since the 2010 Census, Collin County's population has increased by 10.2%. In comparison, the 16-county region has grown 6.3% in that same time period. Public transportation needs will change as the population grows. Additionally, within Collin County, 10.2% of residents speak

English less than very well and information about available transit services may be difficult for these individuals to access if it is provided only in English.

According to U.S. Census employer information as of 2014, Collin County is home to approximately 350,000 jobs, but only 146,000 employees reside within the county. A little over 200,000 people commute into the county, while around 250,000 residents leave the county to access their jobs. Only 44% of job holders live within 10 miles of their jobs in Collin County, with the majority of commuters coming into the county from the south and west. Collin County has fairly diversified work industries. Retail trade is the largest employment sector in the county, with 12.4% of the total jobs. The county is also highly educated, with a little more than half of employees in the county having some college experience or a degree.

Transportation Resources

Communities and residents in Collin County have struggled with identifying and obtaining appropriate public transit services since Texoma Area Paratransit System (TAPS) stopped services in the county in December of 2015. Each city and agency working with TAPS had to find another provider to offer services. The cities of Allen, Fairview, and Wylie entered into agreements with Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) to provide taxi voucher subsidies for older adults and people with disabilities. The city of Frisco entered into an agreement with Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) for demand response service and a taxi voucher subsidy program for older adults and people with disabilities. Frisco residents are able to access destinations located in Frisco, McKinney, Allen, and Plano on a limited basis. Collin County has not yet selected a new rural transportation provider and rural communities remain without public transportation.

The McKinney Urban Transit District (MUTD) contracts with DCTA to provide service for participating MUTD cities including McKinney, Lowry Crossing, Melissa and Princeton. Services include taxi vouchers

and accessible demand response service for residents 65 and older and individuals with disabilities.

DCTA and DART each operate vanpools into and out of Collin County. In all, 49 vanpools originate in Collin County, with 17 vanpools staying within Collin County as their destination.

For DART's member cities, including Richardson and Plano in Collin County, services include light rail in Plano, local bus service, an on-call zone in north Plano, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service. Lastly, DART provides support for Plano Senior Rides, another taxi voucher program available to Plano residents.

See Appendix B-4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

There are some barriers for riders looking to travel between cities with different providers, rural areas and seamless connections into Dallas, Fort Worth, or Denton.

OUTREACH MEETING

A public meeting took place in the City of Allen Council Chambers on July 10, 2017. 287 invitations were mailed and emailed to interested parties throughout the county. Meeting announcements and information were also posted online on the NCTCOG website, and invitees were encouraged to share the invitation with partner organizations and clients to help promote the meeting. A total of 73 people attended.

NCTCOG gave a general welcome and presented on the state of public transit within the county. The presentation covered the stages of planning to bring transit to fruition, including long range plans, corridor studies, near term plans, implementation activities, and identification of existing transit services. Following this, NCTCOG, DART, and DCTA staff held a ques-

tion and answer session with community members addressing general transit needs.

Comments and discussion identified that Collin County currently has a patchwork of public transportation services made up of cities paying for some level of service including McKinney, Melissa, Princeton, Lowry Crossing, Celina, Princeton, Plano, Allen, Fairview, Wylie, and Frisco. Attendees noted that while these transit services are available, they are primarily for older adults and people with disabilities. This leaves a gap for individuals with lower incomes who need to get to work or education opportunities. There's a need for weekend transit service that is not being met. A participant urged planners to think beyond short-term needs and plan a longer-term sustainable public transportation network for Collin County.

TRANSPORTATION POLL

A transportation poll was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper, and available in English and Spanish. The poll collected first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations. Individual poll data revealed personal experiences with transportation. Polls completed by organizations on behalf of their clients explained issues seen by advocates of the people served by each organization. Both forms of the poll provide personal views of the public transportation system. Respondents totaled 360 from Collin County.

46% of individuals indicated that they get a ride with a friend or family member while 21% of respondents said they walk to get where they need to go. Only 12.5% indicated they use existing public transit. The transportation services that sounded most appealing to poll takers were local bus service and community-wide dial-a-ride service. Poll respondents noted that better connections are needed between McKinney, Plano, Allen, Frisco, and Dallas. Cross-county trips were identified as difficult to accommodate.

A number of individuals identified My Possibilities in Plano as an important destination from all parts of Collin County. My Possibilities is an organization that runs a continuing education program for adults with cognitive disabilities that enables them to live full, independent lives. Many poll respondents proposed that Collin County needs a comprehensive, long-term public transportation plan (including rail, local bus service, demand response service, etc.) rather than providing specific service solely for older adults and individuals with disabilities.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders thought should be implemented over the next few years. These strategies build upon the progress that has taken place since the 2013 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Collin County Prioritized Strategies

Collin Strategy 1 In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit

Collin Strategy 2 Improve partnerships and coordination between existing transit providers to simplify cross-community trips

Collin Strategy 3 Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transit through leadership or policy initiatives and to advocate for increasing investment in public transit

Collin Strategy 4 Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate non-traditional ways to deliver public transportation service, including partnerships among public and private transportation providers

Collin Strategy 5 Increase service options in areas with limited access to:

1. Medical appointments including dialysis
2. Job training and education

3. Job opportunities

Collin Strategy 6 Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure transportation resources are up-to-date

Collin Strategy 7 Increase public awareness of available transportation services by conducting targeted marketing to agencies such as human service organizations, medical facilities, and educational facilities

Collin Strategy 8 Advocate for agencies to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Collin Strategy 9 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Regional Strategies

Much like the county strategies, the regional strategies may also be applicable to Collin County.

Regional Strategy 1 In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit

Regional Strategy 2 Continue and expand projects that have a no-wrong-door approach to accessing transit or information about available transit

Regional Strategy 3 Create partnerships to simplify regional trips and reduce the number of transfers between providers

Regional Strategy 4 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Regional Strategy 5 Work towards uniform, regional fares to simplify and reduce the cost of regional trips for riders

Regional Strategy 6 Advocate to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Regional Strategy 7 Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate non-traditional ways to deliver public transportation service, including partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, and transportation network companies

Regional Strategy 8 Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transporta-

tion (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transit through leadership or policy initiatives and to advocate for increasing investment in public transit

Implementing the Plan

Transportation providers and local stakeholders will collaborate to determine next steps, form needed partnerships, identify and pursue funding, and ultimately implement selected strategies. Organizations that want to implement a strategy listed in this plan will need to develop strong partnerships with transportation providers, stakeholder agencies, communities, and counties. NCTCOG staff is available to help organizations identify potential partners and coordination opportunities. Organizations should also identify potential funding sources, which can be a mix of private and public funds, including funds from local, state, and federal sources. Local funds from public and private sources are important to demonstrate a community or organizational commitment to implementing specific strategies. Local funds are especially important to leverage state and federal dollars. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and NCTCOG have regular calls for projects to award federal funds that support projects and strategies listed in this plan.

Characteristics of a highly competitive project:

- Is multi-year. A three year request is recommended for projects providing transit service;
- Identifies an existing public transit provider or existing non-profit transportation provider when proposing to provide transit service;
- Targets individuals with lower incomes for requests of Urbanized Area Formula Program (Job Access/Reverse Commute projects) funds;
- Targets older adults and individuals with disabilities for requests of Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds; and

- Supports one or more strategies outlined in this plan.

If a project is funded through NCTCOG or TxDOT, staff will document the project funding in the Transportation Improvement Program, coordinate necessary approvals, develop contract agreements, and work with implementing agencies to manage the project and all compliance activities associated with federal or state funding.

APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Collin County, please see Appendix C-Collin, available online at www.accessnorthtexas.org. The Public Transportation Toolbox (see Appendix B-3) highlights transit services that can be implemented in the near term to meet specific needs within Collin County.

See Appendix B-4, Private Carriers, for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix B-5, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed.

See Appendix B-6, Transportation Poll, for more information about the transportation poll.

CHAPTER THREE

DALLAS COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to improve public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. These populations can have difficulty finding public transportation options that connect them to doctor's appointments, work opportunities and education or job training. This plan identifies where these transportation connections do not exist or could be improved within Dallas County. This chapter will give an overview of the planning process, research conducted and collected, public outreach meetings, the transportation poll used to collect personal input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Dallas County.

PROCESS

This plan is required by federal guidance to be updated every four years. The plan must be developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors; individuals with disabilities; representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation; human services providers and other members of the public. The plan is updated to address current public transportation needs. Through the process and methods described, prioritized strategies were developed so that future public transportation projects can be implemented when federal and state funding becomes available. Two different types of research were conducted during this plan update: data-based and people-based.

Data-based research included obtaining, reviewing, and analyzing Census data; using Census data to develop a mapping tool to identify locations where transit-dependent individuals may live; and identi-

fying existing public transportation providers. The people-based research included reaching out to communities, organizations, and individuals to obtain feedback about the existing public transportation system and how it could be improved. Feedback was obtained through public outreach meetings and a transportation poll. Through an interactive process, stakeholders prioritized concerns about transit access.

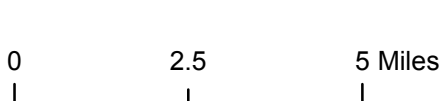
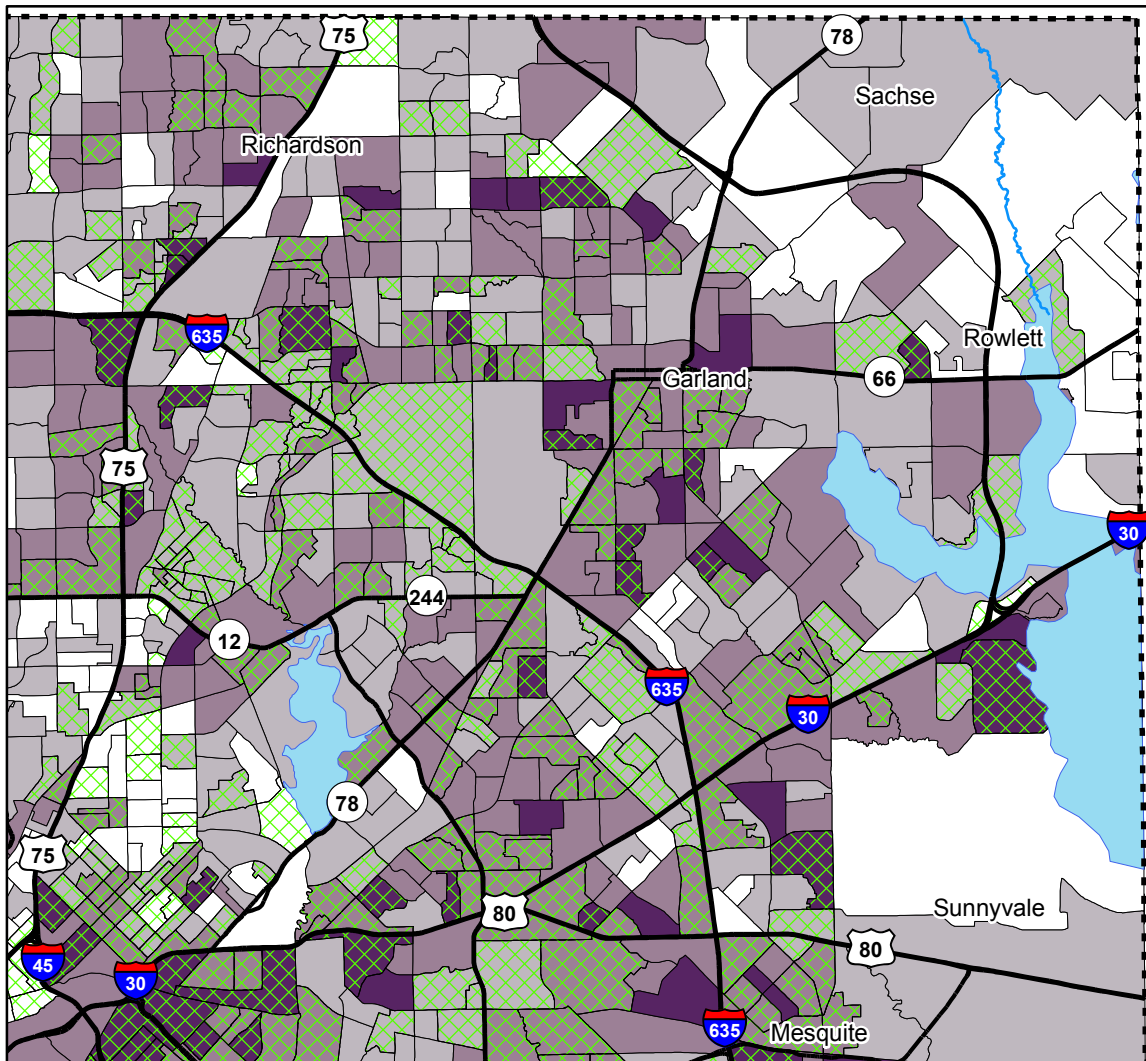
RESEARCH

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

The TAIT was developed to identify locations with certain demographic factors that may indicate a greater need for public transportation. The populations of individuals over age 65, residents below the poverty line, and persons with disabilities were each compared to the regional percentage of the population in that demographic. A map was created based on areas that were above the regional percentage in zero, one, two, or all three of the demographic categories. The more categories that an area is deemed above the regional percentage, the more likely it is that area is to need transit. Zero car households was provided as a supplemental layer to identify households above the regional percentage that do not have a working vehicle available. The tool is useful in identifying groups of people who could benefit from transit services, but is not intended to be the deciding factor in decisions regarding public transportation.

In northeast Dallas County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentages. These areas are dispersed throughout the northeastern quadrant of the county, including along SH 66 in Garland, north






Northeast Dallas County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



Dallas County



Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

-  All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
-  One Variable Above Regional Percentage
-  Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  All Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



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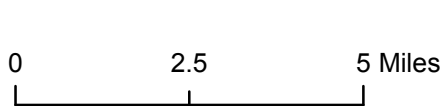
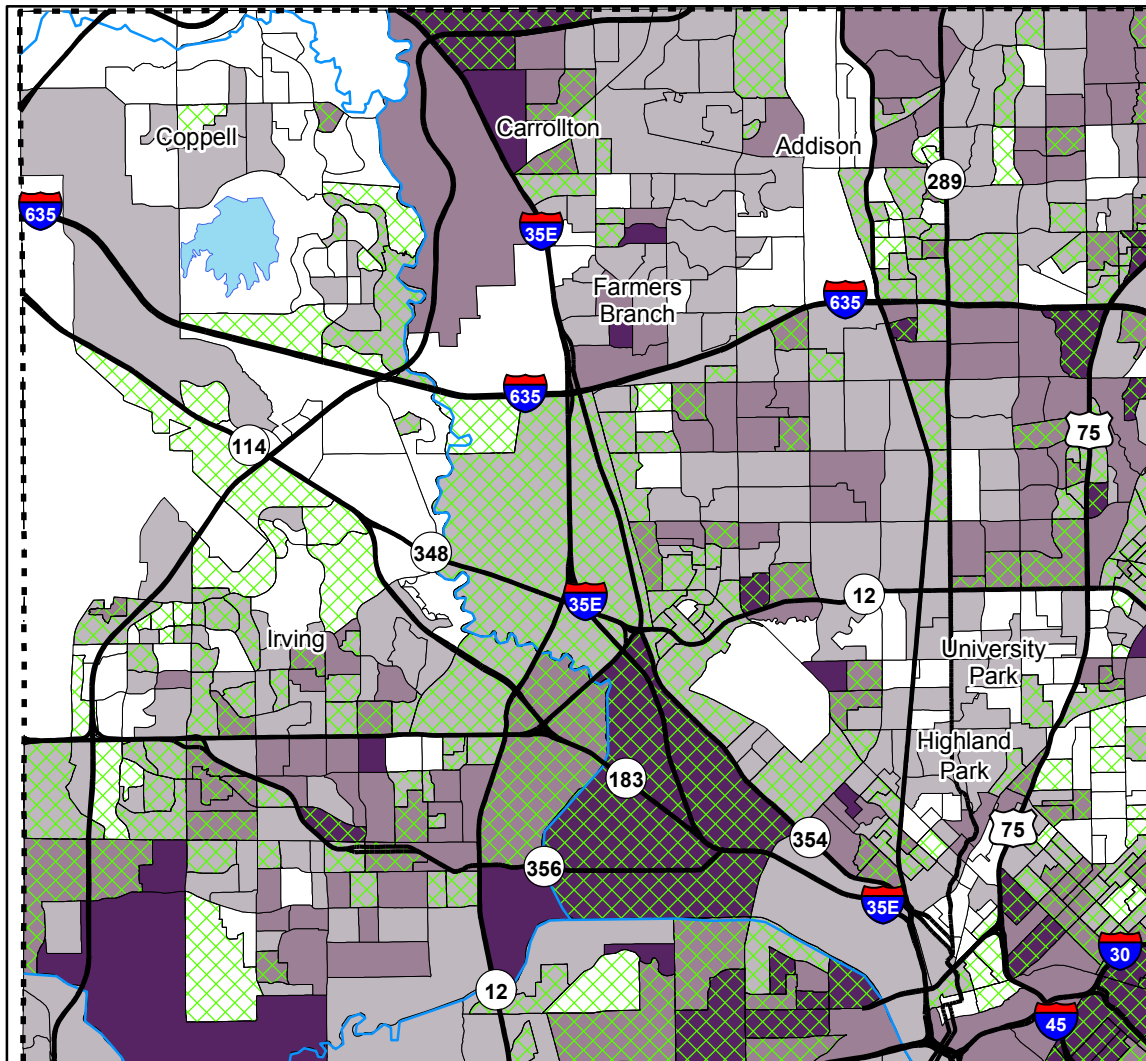
of the I635 corridor near Richardson and Garland, along the I30 corridor, near downtown Dallas, and in Mesquite. Areas with two variables above the regional percentage are also distributed throughout the northeast quadrant of the county. The western part of the quadrant and in Richardson predominantly sees persons age 65 and over and persons with disabilities. The Garland area census block groups with two variables above the regional percentage contain higher levels of persons below the poverty line and persons with disabilities. The block groups south of I30 and US 80 in the southern part of the quadrant are mostly persons below the poverty line and persons with disabilities. The majority of census block groups in the northeast quadrant of Dallas County with only one variable above the regional percentage see persons age 65 and over above the regional percentage. Along the I635 corridor and in the southern part of the quadrant, the predominant variable in block groups above the regional percentage is persons below the poverty line. Three of the four census block groups in Sachse are above the regional percentage in persons with disabilities, the highest concentration in the quadrant. Areas where all three variables are below the regional percentage are along the US 75 corridor in the southwestern part of the quadrant, in the northern part of the quadrant east of US 75 in Richardson, and in the eastern part of the quadrant near Sunnyvale and Rowlett. Zero car households above the regional percentage are dispersed throughout northeast Dallas County, with the majority in the central and southern parts of the quadrant.

In northwest Dallas County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentages. These areas include the I35E corridor in Dallas and Carrollton, along and west of SH 12, near downtown Dallas by I30 and I45, along the US 75 corridor in the eastern part of the quadrant, and in Farmers Branch. The majority of census block groups with two variables above the regional percentage in the central and northern part of

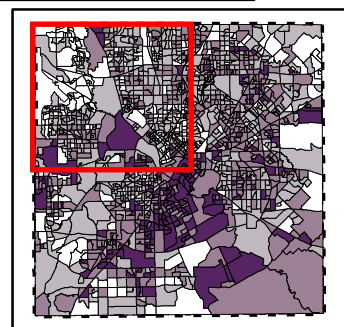
the northwest quadrant of Dallas County are persons age 65 and over and persons with disabilities. The two variables above the regional percentage in some census block groups along SH 289 and US 75, as well as many in the southern part of the quadrant, and south of Irving are persons below the poverty line and persons with disabilities. Several areas in Northwest Dallas County have only one variable above the regional percentage. In the north-central part of the quadrant, near Carrollton, Addison, and Farmers Branch, the single variable is somewhat evenly distributed between persons age 65 and older, persons below the poverty line, or persons with disabilities. In the Highland Park and University Park areas as well as east of SH 289, the single variable census block groups are predominantly persons age 65 and over, with some areas of persons with disabilities. In the southeastern part of the northwest quadrant, the one variable above the regional percentage is mainly persons below the poverty line. Northwest Dallas County also sees many areas where all three variables are below the regional percentage. These areas include north Irving, north of the SH 114 corridor, the Coppell area, Addison, and along the SH 289 and US 75 corridors in the eastern part of the quadrant. Zero car households above the regional percentage are prevalent throughout northwest Dallas County. Nearly all of the south-central census block groups in the quadrant have zero car households at a higher rate than regional percentage. Zero car households are also prevalent along the US 75, SH 289, SH 114, and I635 corridors.

In southeast Dallas County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentages. These areas are mostly located along the I45 corridor, especially north of I20. There are also several census block groups with all three variables above the regional percentages north of US 175 and west of I635 near Balch Springs, as well as along US 175 in Seagoville. In areas where two variables are above the regional percentage, the majority of block groups have both persons below






Northwest Dallas County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



Dallas County



Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

-  All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
-  One Variable Above Regional Percentage
-  Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  All Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



the poverty line and persons with disabilities above the regional percentage. Northwest of Balch Springs, there are a few block groups with two variables above the regional percentage based on persons below the poverty line and persons age 65 and older. There are also several areas in southeast Dallas County where only one variable is above the regional percentage. The majority of these census block groups are located in the central and north central part of the quadrant. The variable seen the most in this part of the county is persons below the poverty line. East of Balch Springs, several block groups are persons with disabilities, while Lancaster's block groups with a single variable above the regional percentage are evenly distributed between persons age 65 and older, persons below the poverty line, or persons with disabilities. Zero car households above the regional percentage are predominantly located north of I20 and west of I635. There are also zero car households above the regional percentage along SH 342 in Lancaster, I45 in Wilmer, and US 175 in Seagoville.

In southwest Dallas County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentages. These areas are mostly in the northeastern part of this quadrant of Dallas County, with some scattered along the US 67 corridor, I35E corridor, and along the President George Bush Turnpike in the northwestern part of the quadrant. Areas with two variables above the regional percentage are located throughout the southwest part of Dallas County, especially along the US 67 and I35E corridors. Along the US 67 corridor near Duncanville and Cedar Hill, as well as the block groups near DeSoto, the block groups with two variables above the regional percentage mostly contain persons age 65 and over and persons with disabilities. The block groups with two variables above the regional percentage near Cockrell Hill, Grand Prairie, and Lancaster contain predominantly persons below the poverty line and persons with disabilities, or persons age 65 and over and persons below the poverty line. Central

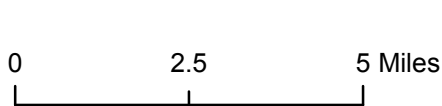
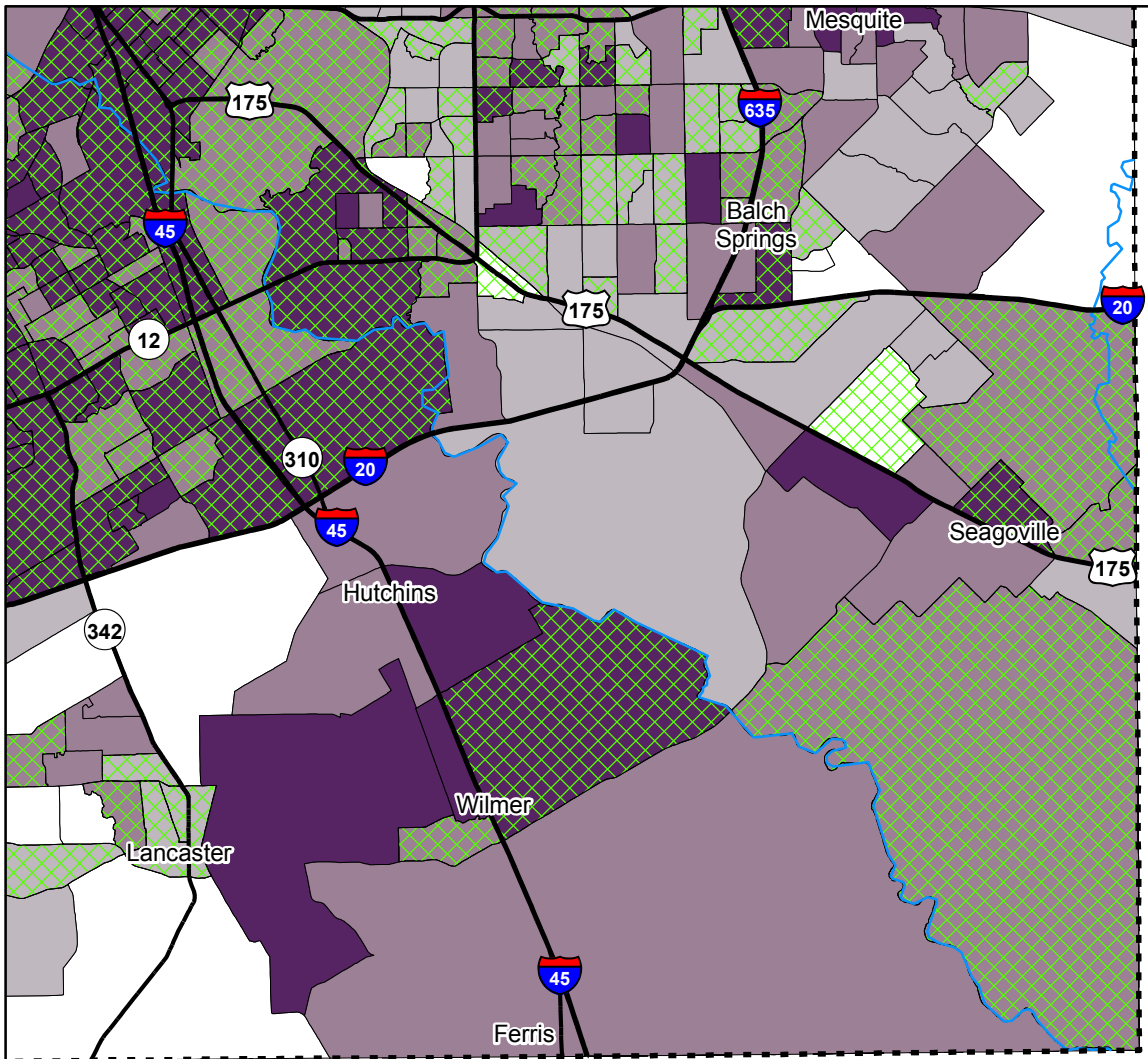
and western parts of southwest Dallas County are the primary areas where block groups have only one variable above the regional percentage. Block groups in Grand Prairie, Cockrell Hill, east of US 67 in Cedar Hill, along the SH 180 corridor, and near Lancaster are primarily persons below the poverty line or persons with disabilities. The DeSoto area and west of US 67 in Cedar Hill predominantly sees persons age 65 and over, while the block groups near Glenn Heights with one variable above the regional percentage are mostly persons with disabilities. Southern and western parts of southwest Dallas County are the main areas where all variable are at or below the regional percentage. Most of these areas are south of the I20 corridor, with some scattered block groups near Cockrell Hill. Zero car households are mostly in the northeastern part of the quadrant, with some other areas along US 67 corridor, the PGBT corridor, and the I35E corridor.

Additional Demographic and Commuter Information

Dallas County continues to experience a steady amount of growth. According to the American Community Survey's 2015 5-year estimates, since the 2010 Census, Dallas County's population has increased by 4.9%. In comparison, the 16-county region has grown 6.3% in that same time period. Public transportation needs will change as the population grows. Additionally, within Dallas County, 20.9% of residents speak English less than very well and information about available transit services may be difficult for these individuals to access if it is provided only in English.

According to U.S. Census employer information as of 2014, Dallas County is home to nearly 1,500,000 jobs, with around 680,000 of those employed at those jobs living in the county. Approximately 790,000 commuters enter Dallas County for work, while around 314,000 travel out of the county for work. Only around one-third of workers live less than 10 miles from work, with most commuters traveling from the north and east of the county to get to their jobs. Overall, Dallas County has a very diverse eco-

Southeast Dallas County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



Dallas County



Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

- All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
- One Variable Above Regional Percentage
- Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
- All Variables Above Regional Percentage
- Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

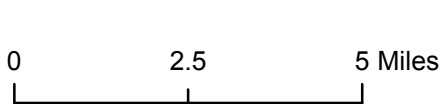
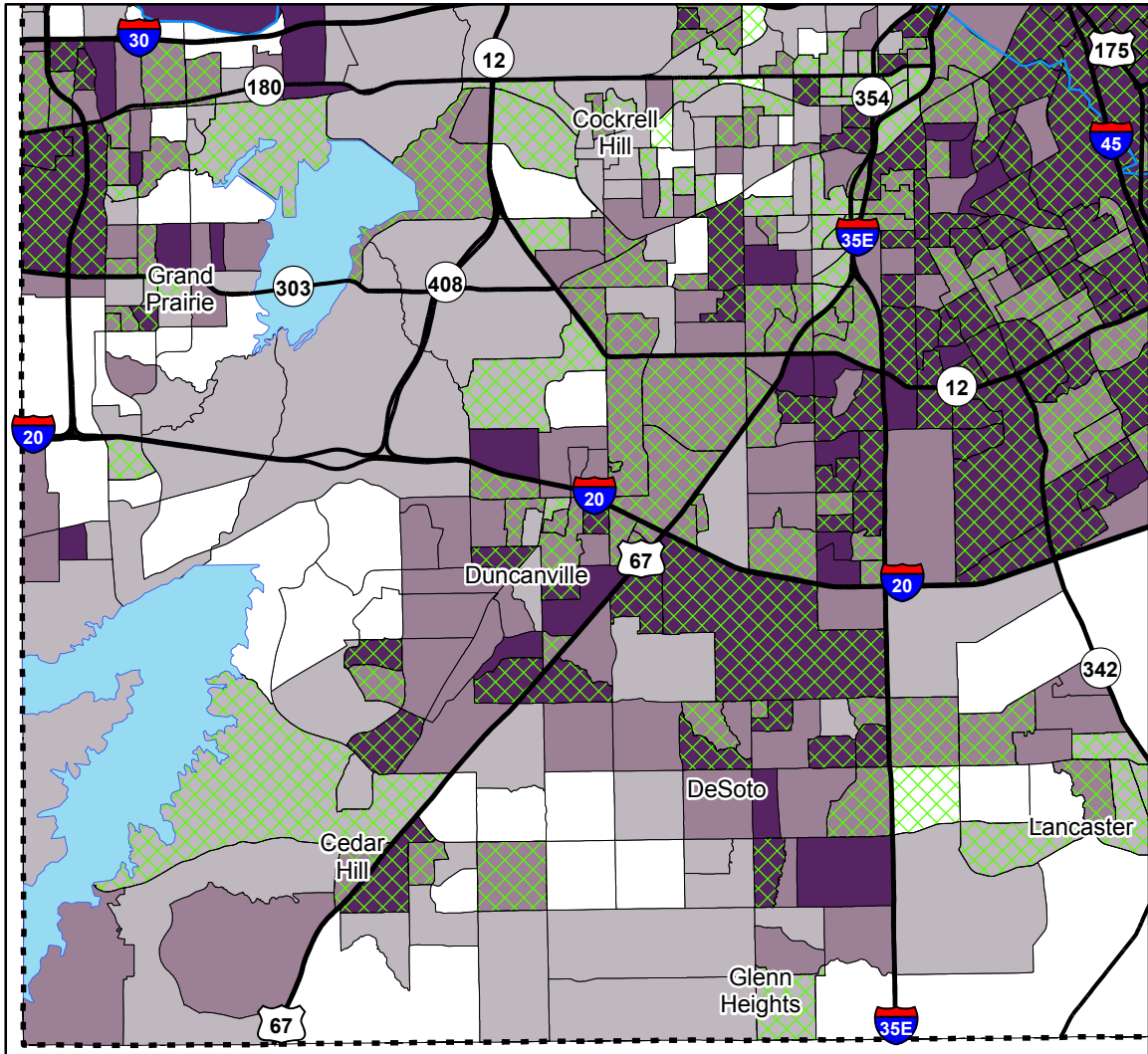
The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



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Southwest Dallas County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



Dallas County



Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

-  All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
-  One Variable Above Regional Percentage
-  Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  All Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



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conomic landscape. The county is also well educated, with approximately 5 in 10 workers having some college or a degree.

Transportation Resources

There are numerous transportation providers within Dallas County. Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) is the main transportation provider for thirteen member cities. DART's services include light rail, local bus service, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service, eight on-call zones, Dallas Streetcar, McKinney Avenue Trolley, and vanpools. DART, Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA), and the Fort Worth Transportation Authority (FWTA) each operate vanpools that either begin or end in Dallas County. In all, 60 vanpools originate in Dallas County, and 157 vanpools have Dallas County as their destination. Additionally, the Trinity Railway Express (TRE) is jointly owned and operated by DART and FWTA and connects Dallas to Fort Worth and points in between.

STAR Transit operates three commuter routes in Mesquite, Balch Springs, and Seagoville. Each of these routes connect to DART's light rail system at either the Lawnview Station or Buckner Station. In partnership with the city of Mesquite, Balch Springs, and Seagoville, STAR Transit also provides curb-to-curb transportation in those cities. The Grand Connection provides curb-to-curb transportation to older adults and individuals with disabilities in the city of Grand Prairie. Metrocrest Services provides transportation to older adults and individuals with disabilities in Carrollton, Farmers Branch, Addison and Coppell.

Additional resources that provide or facilitate access to transportation include numerous human service and social service agencies, cities, My Ride Dallas, United Way of Metropolitan Dallas, Goodwill Industries of Dallas, Metrocare Services (Dallas County MHMR), and major employers. My Ride Dallas is an organization that connects residents to transportation providers and resources, based on their needs. Also, see Appendix B-4, Private Carriers, for a list of private

transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

Even with the transportation providers listed above, transportation gaps still exist in Dallas County. There are also some barriers for riders looking to travel between cities with different providers, rural areas and seamless connections into Tarrant County and Collin County. As you can see in the map on page 2.15, there remain areas of Dallas County that do not have transit service.

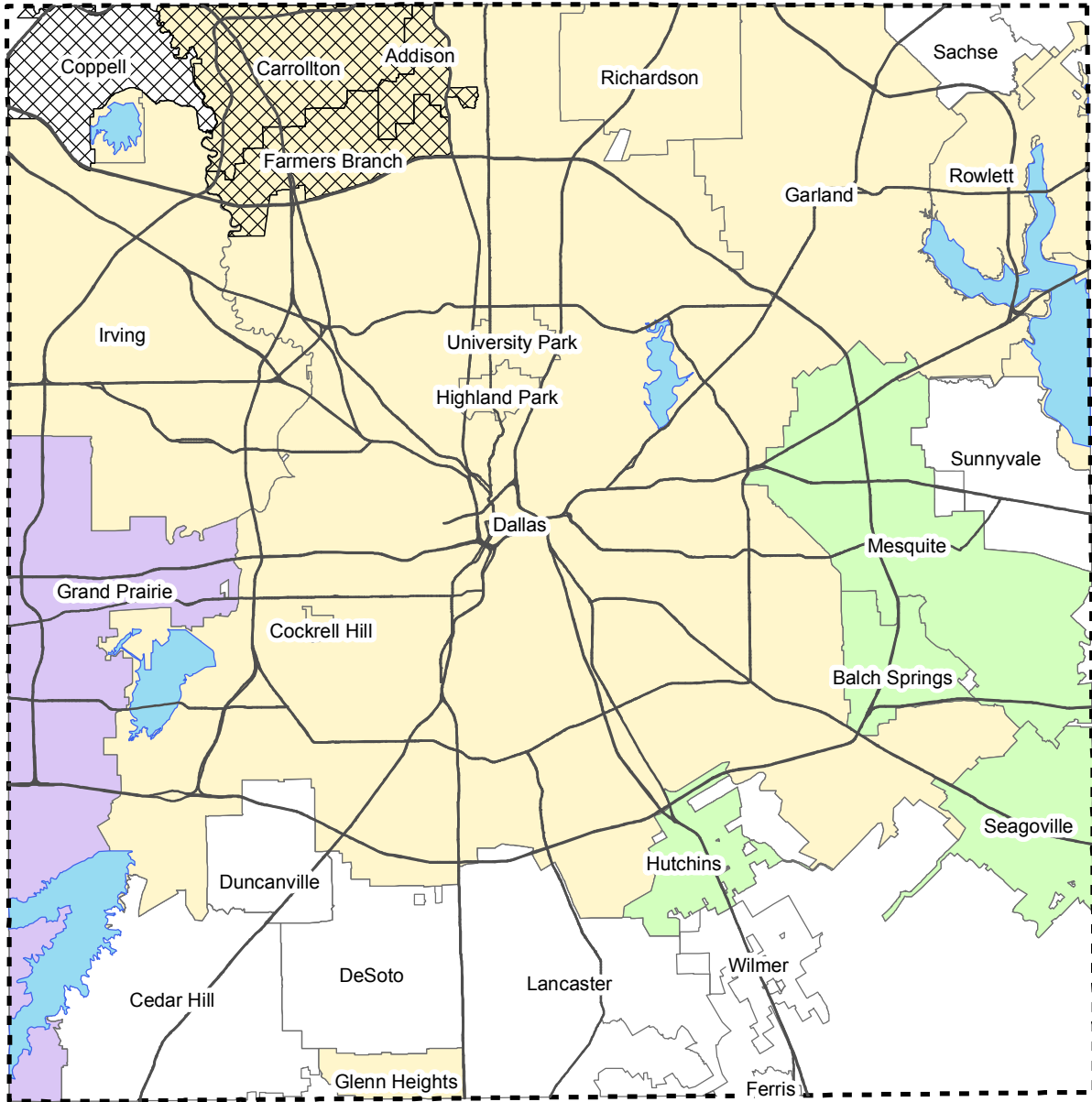
OUTREACH MEETINGS





Three public meetings were held in January 2017 at the University of North Texas at Dallas, at Dallas Area Rapid Transit headquarters, and at Richland College's Garland Campus. 293 invitations were mailed and emailed to interested parties throughout the county. Meeting announcements and information were also posted online, and invitees were encouraged to share the invitation with partner organizations and clients to help promote the meetings. A total of 92 people attended the meetings.

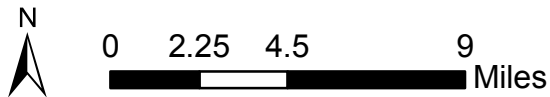
Following a general welcome and presentation about public transit within the county, staff led an interactive keypad polling session to instigate discussion of transportation issues with attendees. Based on discussion question answers, community members prioritized current issues in the county and re-prioritized strategies from the 2013 Access North Texas Plan.

Comments and discussion at the three Dallas County outreach meetings identified that while Dallas County has a number of transportation providers, gaps in service still exist. Gaps range from no service in parts of the county to areas with transit service that need to expand service to match underserved populations. Attendees noted that coordination between agencies will be necessary to leverage limited State and federal funds for transit projects. People in attendance also

Dallas County Transportation Providers



-  Metrocrest Services
-  Grand Connection
-  STAR Transit
-  Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)



noted that it is important to increase the awareness of available public transit.

TRANSPORTATION POLL

A transportation poll was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper, and available in English and Spanish. The poll collected first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations. Individual poll data revealed personal experiences with transportation. Polls completed by organizations on behalf of their clients explained issues seen by advocates of the people served by each organization. Both forms of the poll provide personal views of the public transportation system. Respondents totaled 392 from Dallas County.

48% of individuals indicated that they get a ride with a friend or family member while 17% use rail or bus service to get where they need to go. The top reasons individuals couldn't get where they needed to go included: not having a car, no one is available to drive them, or available public transportation doesn't meet their needs. The transportation services that sounded most appealing to survey takers were local bus service and community-wide dial-a-ride service.

Poll respondents identified connecting Grand Prairie to Arlington, Dallas, Coppell, and Irving as an unmet need. A public transportation connection to Collin County is also needed. Specific destinations included McKinney, Plano, and My Possibilities in Plano. Poll respondents also noted current frustrations with existing paratransit service includes the advanced notice to reserve a trip, late pick-ups and drop-offs, long pick-up windows, and long shared-ride trips. Lastly, public transportation is needed throughout Dallas County, including cities not served by DART.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders thought should be implemented over the next few years. These strategies build upon the progress

that has taken place since the 2013 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Prioritized Strategies

Dallas Strategy 1 In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit

Dallas Strategy 2 In areas with limited public transit service, expand service to:

1. Add additional hours of operation
2. Serve new populations (such as older adults, people with disabilities, children, students, employees, etc.)
3. Provide transit for additional purposes (such as medical, work, grocery store, pharmacy, social, etc.)
4. Connect to additional locations, like regional job centers and large medical facilities

Dallas Strategy 3 For areas with public transit service, expand transit to match underserved populations or purposes:

1. Medical appointments to avoid accessing emergency transportation
2. Social opportunities to improve quality of life
3. Better/more direct access to job centers and transit services that matches non-traditional shift schedules

Dallas Strategy 4 When expanding transit service, use partnerships with local employers, medical centers, cities, and other agencies to leverage multiple funding sources

Dallas Strategy 5 Improve partnerships and coordination between existing transit providers to simplify regional trips

Dallas Strategy 6 Continue to conduct travel training to teach riders how to use public transportation and make regional transfers

Dallas Strategy 7 Continue to conduct targeted marketing to local agencies about existing transportation resources

Dallas Strategy 8 Complete and expand projects that have a no wrong door approach to accessing transit:

1. Update DART's GoPass software to include on-demand providers such as taxi, transportation network companies (like Uber or Lyft), bike and car sharing services; upgrade the trip planning feature; integrate carpooling; work with medium and small transit providers to join the app; and allow multiple payment options, including options for individuals without credit cards
2. Continue an effort like My Ride Dallas and My Ride North Texas, including development of an online trip planning tool; online and over the phone trip counseling; outreach and education about existing transportation resources and providers; identifying gaps in service; and production (print or digital) of transportation resource guides.

Dallas Strategy 9 Advocate for agencies to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Dallas Strategy 10 Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure transportation resources are up-to-date

Dallas Strategy 11 Provide information about transportation providers and resources in multiple languages

Dallas Strategy 12 Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transit through leadership or policy initiatives and to advocate for increasing investment in public transit

Dallas Strategy 13 Create partnerships between transit agencies, municipalities, and community organizations to increase the accessibility of bus stops and paths to bus and rail transit; leverage municipal investment in accessibility projects to further support cities' investment in public transportation

Regional Strategies for Coordinated Public Transportation

Much like the county strategies, the regional strategies may also be applicable to Dallas County.

Regional Strategy 1 In areas with no public transit

service, assess community needs and implement transit

Regional Strategy 2 Continue and expand projects that have a no-wrong-door approach to accessing transit or information about available transit

Regional Strategy 3 Create partnerships to simplify regional trips and reduce the number of transfers between providers

Regional Strategy 4 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Regional Strategy 5 Work towards uniform, regional fares to simplify and reduce the cost of regional trips for riders

Regional Strategy 6 Advocate to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Regional Strategy 7 Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate non-traditional ways to deliver public transportation service, including partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, and transportation network companies

Regional Strategy 8 Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transit through leadership or policy initiatives and to advocate for increasing investment in public transit

Implementing the Plan

Transportation providers and local stakeholders will collaborate to determine next steps, form needed partnerships, identify and pursue funding, and ultimately implement selected strategies. Organizations that want to implement a strategy listed in this plan will need to develop strong partnerships with transportation providers, stakeholder agencies, communities, and counties. NCTCOG staff is available to help organizations identify potential partners and coordination opportunities. Organizations should also identify potential funding sources, which can be a mix of private and public funds, including funds from local, state, and federal sources. Local funds from public

and private sources are important to demonstrate a community or organizational commitment to implementing specific strategies. Local funds are especially important to leverage state and federal dollars. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and NCTCOG have regular calls for projects to award federal funds that support projects and strategies listed in this plan.

Characteristics of a highly competitive project:

- Is multi-year. A three year request is recommended for projects providing transit service;
- Identifies an existing public transit provider or existing non-profit transportation provider when proposing to provide transit service;
- Targets individuals with lower incomes for requests of Urbanized Area Formula Program (Job Access/Reverse Commute projects) funds;
- Targets older adults and individuals with disabilities for requests of Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds; and
- Supports one or more strategies outlined in this plan.

If a project is funded through NCTCOG or TxDOT, staff will document the project funding in the Transportation Improvement Program, coordinate necessary approvals, develop contract agreements, and work with implementing agencies to manage the project and all compliance activities associated with federal or state funding.

APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Dallas County, please see Appendix C-Dallas, available online at www.accessnorthtexas.org. The Public Transportation Toolbox (see Appendix B-3) highlights transit services that can be implemented in the near term to meet specific needs within Dallas County.

See Appendix B-4, Private Carriers, for a list of private

transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix B-5, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed.

See Appendix B-6, Transportation Poll, for more information about the transportation poll.

DENTON COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to improve public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. These populations can have difficulty finding public transportation options that connect them to doctor's appointments, work opportunities and education or job training. This plan identifies where these transportation connections do not exist or could be improved within Denton County. This chapter will give an overview of the planning process, research conducted and collected, public outreach meetings, the transportation poll used to collect personal input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Denton County.

PROCESS

This plan is required by federal guidance to be updated every four years. The plan must be developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors; individuals with disabilities; representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation; human services providers and other members of the public. The plan is updated to address current public transportation needs of the residents of Denton County. Through the process and methods described, prioritized strategies were developed so that future public transportation projects can be implemented when federal and state funding becomes available. Two different types of research were conducted during this plan update: data-based and people-based.

Data-based research included obtaining, reviewing, and analyzing Census data; using Census data to develop a mapping tool to identify locations where

transit-dependent individuals may live; and identifying existing public transportation providers. The people-based research included reaching out to communities, organizations, and individuals to obtain feedback about the existing public transportation system and how it could be improved. Feedback was obtained through public outreach meetings and a transportation poll. Through an interactive process, stakeholders prioritized concerns about transit access.

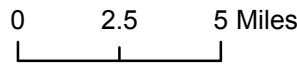
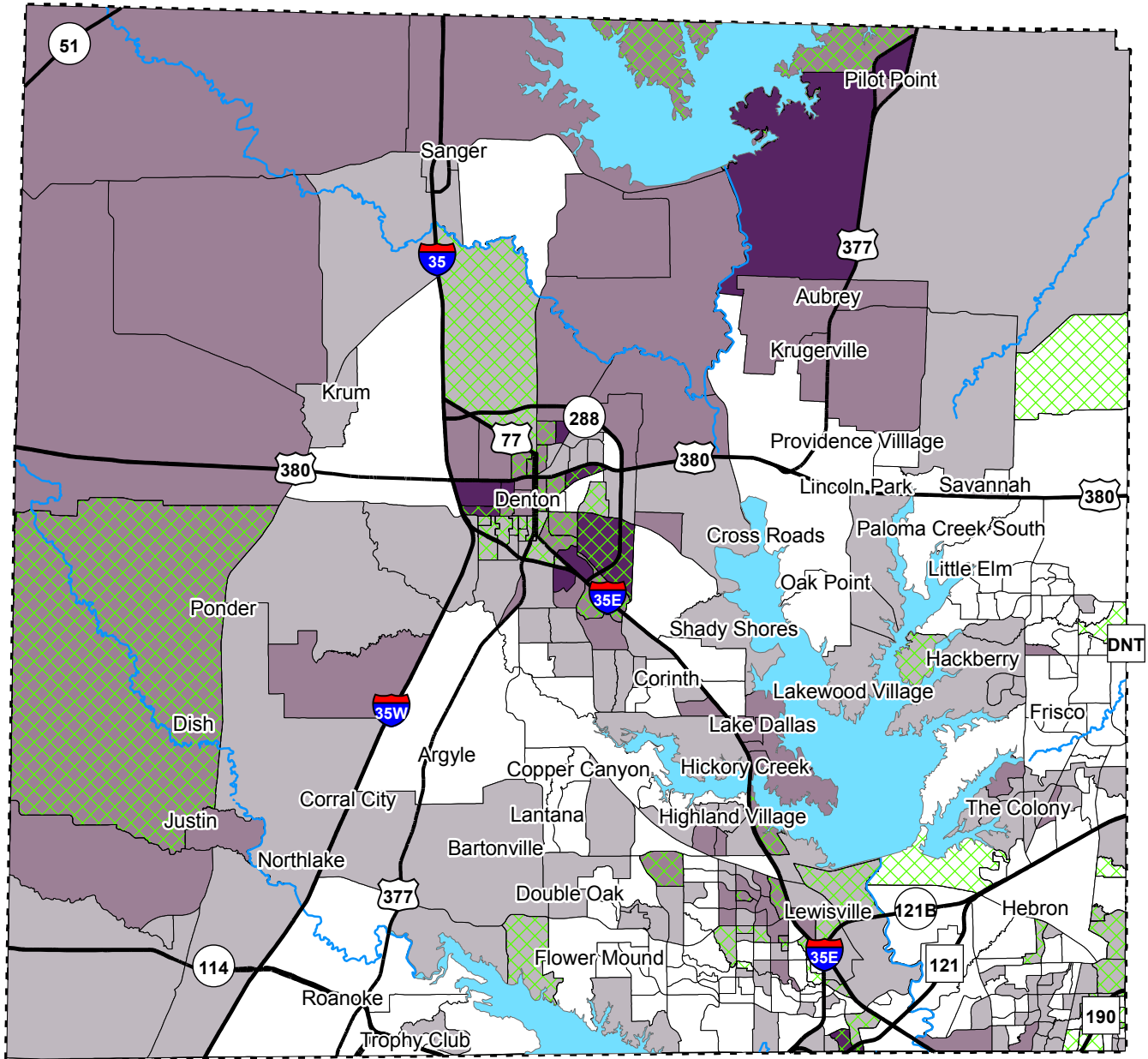
RESEARCH

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

The TAIT was developed to identify locations with certain demographic factors that may indicate a greater need for public transportation. The populations of individuals over age 65, residents below the poverty line, and persons with disabilities were each compared to the regional percentage of the population in that demographic. A map was created based on areas that were above the regional percentage in zero, one, two, or all three of the demographic categories. The more categories that an area is deemed above the regional percentage, the more likely it is that area is to need transit. Zero car households was provided as a supplemental layer to identify households above the regional percentage that do not have a working vehicle available. The tool is useful in identifying groups of people who could benefit from transit services, but is not intended to be the deciding factor in decisions regarding public transportation.

In Denton County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all

Denton County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

- All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
- One Variable Above Regional Percentage
- Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
- All Variables Above Regional Percentage
- Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

above the regional percentages. These areas include west of US 377 near Pilot Point and within the city of Denton. The majority of census block groups with two variables above the regional percentages see higher percentages of persons age 65 and over and persons with disabilities. Some census block groups to the south of Denton, near Lake Dallas and Lewisville, see higher percentages of persons below the poverty line and persons with disabilities. In Denton, most of the block groups with one variable above the regional percentage have higher percentages of persons below the poverty line. County wide, the vast majority of census block groups with one variable above the regional percentage see either a higher percentage of persons age 65 and over or persons with disabilities. Many of the census block groups in east and south Denton County see all three variables at or below the regional average. Zero car households above the regional percentage are mostly seen in and around the city of Denton, and the southeastern portion of the county. The census block groups northwest of Pilot Point and west of Ponder, Dish, and Justin also have a higher percentage of zero car households.

Additional Demographic and Commuter Information

Denton County continues to experience a significant amount of growth. According to the American Community Survey's 2015 5-year estimates, since the 2010 Census, Denton County's population has increased by 10.4%. In comparison, the 16-county region has grown 6.3% in that same time period. Public transportation providers have continued to steadily expand service within Denton County, however there are still populations and areas without transit service. Additionally, within Denton County, 8.5% of residents speak English less than very well and information about available transit services may be difficult for these individuals to access if it is provided only in English.

According to U.S. Census employer information as of 2014, Denton County was home to just under

200,000 jobs, with around 86,000 workers living within the county. Approximately 109,000 workers commuted into Denton County, while nearly 264,000 commuted out of the county for employment. The majority of commuters into the county came from the south and east. Both the educational services and retail trade sectors made up around 25% of the county's jobs combined, with approximately 45% of the workforce having some college education or a degree.

Transportation Resources

The main transportation provider, Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA), offers several services to the general public in the greater Lewisville and Denton area. These services include local bus service in Denton, Lewisville and Highland Village. DCTA offers Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service in Denton, Lewisville and Highland Village. DCTA operates campus shuttles to the University of North Texas and North Central Texas College. A commuter rail service, the A-train, connects passengers from the city of Denton to downtown Dallas with stops in Denton and Lewisville. Commuter vanpool service is available for those living or working in Denton County through DCTA, Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), and the Fort Worth Transportation Authority (FWTA). In all, 23 vanpools originate in Denton County, with 32 vanpools ending with Denton County as their destination. DCTA, in partnership with FWTA, operates bus service that connects Denton with downtown Fort Worth with a stop in Alliance.

Span, Inc. (Span) provides demand response public transportation to several areas in Denton County. Span also provides transportation to Denton County veterans to the Veterans Affairs hospitals in Fort Worth and Dallas.

See Appendix B-4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can

contract with to provide specific service for clients.

OUTREACH MEETINGS

Two public meetings were held:

- April 19, 2017 at the City of Lewisville's Municipal Annex Building
- April 26, 2017 at DCTA's Downtown Denton Transit Center

283 invitations were mailed and emailed to interested parties throughout the county. Meeting announcements and information were also posted online, and invitees were encouraged to share the invitation with partner organizations and clients to help promote the meetings. A total of 50 people attended the meetings.

Following a general welcome and presentation about public transit within the county, staff led an interactive keypad polling session to instigate discussion of transportation issues with attendees. Based on discussion question answers, community members prioritized current issues in the county and re-prioritized strategies from the 2013 Access North Texas Plan.

Comments and discussion from both public meetings identified that it is difficult for veterans to get to the Veterans Administration clinic in Bonham. Tarrant County and Dallas County also are difficult trip destinations for medical appointments. Additionally, better information about the available transportation services and how to access them needs to be distributed. A participant noted that there are certain social services that people are required to access in Denton, but struggle to find the transportation from rural Denton and neighboring counties.

TRANSPORTATION POLL

A transportation poll was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper, and available in English and Spanish. The poll collected first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations. Individual poll data revealed per-

sonal experiences with transportation. Polls completed by organizations on behalf of their clients explained issues seen by advocates of the people served by each organization. Both forms of the poll provide personal views of the public transportation system. Respondents totaled 69 from Denton County.

49% of respondents indicated that they get around by riding with a friend or family member. Individuals indicated that no available public transportation services and the inability to have a friend or family member drive them are the biggest barriers to getting where they need to go. The transportation services that sounded most appealing to poll takers were local bus service and community-wide dial-a-ride service.

Poll respondents identified that better connections to Dallas County, Tarrant County, and Collin County are necessary. Specific locations included Dallas, Fort Worth, Alliance, and Plano. Individuals also noted that they are open to Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), like Uber and Lyft, being part of the transportation solution.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders thought should be implemented over the next few years. These strategies build upon the progress that has taken place since the 2013 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Prioritized Strategies

Denton Strategy 1 In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit

Denton Strategy 2 Improve affordable public transportation to the VA clinic in Bonham

Denton Strategy 3 Improve regional access to medical appointments in Dallas County and Tarrant County

Denton Strategy 4 Increase awareness of public transit availability through opportunities such as:

1. Presentations to city councils about available services
2. Outreach events
3. Targeted marketing to local agencies about existing transportation resources

Denton Strategy 5 Increase awareness of how to use available transit services through opportunities such as:

1. An Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) rights campaign
2. Training on how to qualify or apply for transit services
3. Training on how to schedule a trip

Denton Strategy 6 Continue to conduct customer service focused training for transit agency employees

Denton Strategy 7 Conduct planning to assess needs and identify transportation solutions to improve access to education and education facilities

Denton Strategy 8 Improve partnerships and coordination between existing transit providers to simplify regional trips and explore cost-sharing options for services that cross service area or geographic boundaries

Denton Strategy 9 Advocate for agencies to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Denton Strategy 10 Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transit through leadership or policy initiatives and to advocate for increasing investment in public transit

Denton Strategy 11 Continue coordinating committee meetings to discuss transportation needs within Denton County

Denton Strategy 12 Create partnerships between transit agencies, municipalities, and community organizations to increase the accessibility of bus stops and paths to transit

Regional Strategies for Coordinated Public Transportation

Much like the county strategies, the regional strategies may also be applicable to Denton County.

Regional Strategy 1 In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit

Regional Strategy 2 Continue and expand projects that have a no-wrong-door approach to accessing transit or information about available transit

Regional Strategy 3 Create partnerships to simplify regional trips and reduce the number of transfers between providers

Regional Strategy 4 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Regional Strategy 5 Work towards uniform, regional fares to simplify and reduce the cost of regional trips for riders

Regional Strategy 6 Advocate to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Regional Strategy 7 Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate non-traditional ways to deliver public transportation service, including partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, and transportation network companies

Regional Strategy 8 Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transit through leadership or policy initiatives and to advocate for increasing investment in public transit

Implementing the Plan

Transportation providers and local stakeholders will collaborate to determine next steps, form needed partnerships, identify and pursue funding, and ultimately implement selected strategies. Organizations that want to implement a strategy listed in this plan will need to develop strong partnerships with transportation providers, stakeholder agencies, communities, and counties. NCTCOG staff is available to help

organizations identify potential partners and coordination opportunities. Organizations should also identify potential funding sources, which can be a mix of private and public funds, including funds from local, state, and federal sources. Local funds from public and private sources are important to demonstrate a community or organizational commitment to implementing specific strategies. Local funds are especially important to leverage state and federal dollars. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and NCTCOG have regular calls for projects to award federal funds that support projects and strategies listed in this plan.

Characteristics of a highly competitive project:

- Is multi-year. A three year request is recommended for projects providing transit service;
- Identifies an existing public transit provider or existing non-profit transportation provider when proposing to provide transit service;
- Targets individuals with lower incomes for requests of Urbanized Area Formula Program (Job Access/Reverse Commute projects) funds;
- Targets older adults and individuals with disabilities for requests of Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds; and
- Supports one or more strategies outlined in this plan.

If a project is funded through NCTCOG or TxDOT, staff will document the project funding in the Transportation Improvement Program, coordinate necessary approvals, develop contract agreements, and work with implementing agencies to manage the project and all compliance activities associated with federal or state funding.

APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Denton County, please see Appendix C-Denton, available online at

www.accessnorthtexas.org. The Public Transportation Toolbox (see Appendix B-3) highlights transit services that can be implemented in the near term to meet specific needs within Denton County.

See Appendix B-4, Private Carriers, for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix B-5, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed.

See Appendix B-6, Transportation Poll, for more information about the transportation poll.

ELLIS COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to improve public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. These populations can have difficulty finding public transportation options that connect them to doctor's appointments, work opportunities and education or job training. This plan identifies where these transportation connections do not exist or could be improved within Ellis County. This chapter will give an overview of the planning process, research conducted and collected, the public outreach meeting, the transportation poll used to collect personal input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Ellis County.

PROCESS

This plan is required by federal guidance to be updated every four years. The plan must be developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors; individuals with disabilities; representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation; human services providers and other members of the public. The plan is updated to address current public transportation needs of the residents of Ellis County. Through the process and methods described, prioritized strategies were developed so that future public transportation projects can be implemented when federal and state funding becomes available. Two different types of research were conducted during this plan update: data-based and people-based.

Data-based research included obtaining, reviewing, and analyzing Census data; using Census data to develop a mapping tool to identify locations where

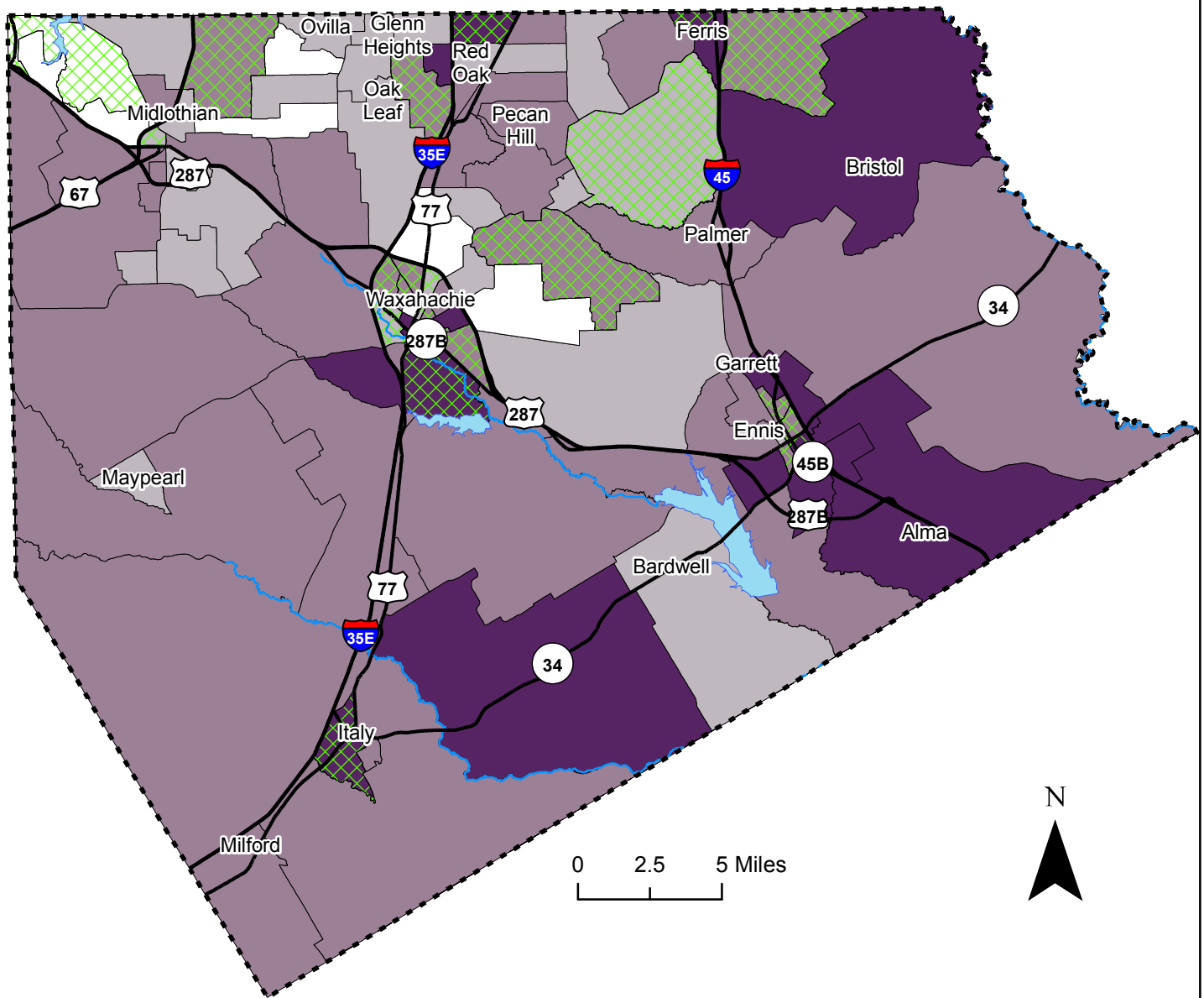
transit-dependent individuals may live; and identifying existing public transportation providers. The people-based research included reaching out to communities, organizations, and individuals to obtain feedback about the existing public transportation system and how it could be improved. Feedback was obtained through a public outreach meeting and a transportation poll. Through an interactive process, stakeholders and representatives prioritized concerns about transit access.

RESEARCH

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

The TAIT was developed to identify locations with certain demographic factors that may indicate a greater need for public transportation. The populations of individuals over age 65, residents below the poverty line, and persons with disabilities were each compared to the regional percentage of the population in that demographic. A map was created based on areas that were above the regional percentage in zero, one, two, or all three of the demographic categories. The more categories that an area is deemed above the regional percentage, the more likely it is that area is to need transit. Zero car households was provided as a supplemental layer to identify households above the regional percentage that do not having a working vehicle available. The tool is useful in identifying groups of people who could benefit from transit services, but is not intended to be the deciding factor in decisions regarding public transportation.

Ellis County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

- All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
- One Variable Above Regional Percentage
- Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
- All Variables Above Regional Percentage
- Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



In Ellis County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentage. Census block groups where all three variables are above the regional percentage are in Italy, the rural area along SH 34 east of Italy, Ennis, Alma, Bristol, block groups along Business 287 in Waxahachie, Ferris, and along 135E in Red Oak. The vast majority of the census block groups with two variables that exceed the regional percentage have populations of individuals age 65 and over and persons with disabilities that are above the regional percentage. The census block group directly to the north of Maypearl, northeast of Bardwell along SH 34, and the block containing the Pecan Hill label are the only block groups that are different, with the two variables above the regional percentage being persons below the poverty line and persons with disabilities. All census block groups with only one variable above the regional percentage, except the block group directly west of Garrett, contain a higher percentage of either persons age 65 and over or persons with disabilities. The block group directly west of Garrett is the only block where the single variable is persons below the poverty line. Census block groups at or below the regional percentage for all three categories are located north and east of Waxahachie along US 287 and in northwest Ellis County along US 287. Areas where households without cars above the regional percentage are most prevalent in Italy and Waxahachie, as well as much of northern Ellis County.

Additional Demographic and Commuter Information

Ellis County continues to experience steady growth. According to the American Community Survey's 2015 5-year estimates, since the 2010 Census, Ellis County's population has increased by 5%. In comparison, the 16-county region has grown 6.3% in that same time period. Public transportation needs will change as the population grows. Additionally, within Ellis County, 8.5% of residents speak English less than very well and information about available transit services

may be difficult for these individuals to access if it is provided only in English.

According to U.S. Census employer information as of 2014, Ellis County had just over 42,000 jobs, with 19,000 of these employees living within the county. Around 23,000 commuters enter the county each day for work, while approximately 52,000 workers leave the county. Just over one-third of workers in Ellis County lived within 10 miles of their jobs, with the majority of commuters coming from the north and west. The economy is somewhat diverse in Ellis County, with the manufacturing industry being the largest employer in the county with nearly one-quarter of all jobs. The workforce is fairly well educated, with around four in ten having some college education or a degree.

Transportation Resources

Community Transit Services (CTS) and STAR Transit provide demand response public transportation in Ellis County. CTS is the primary general public transportation provider and serves all of Ellis County. STAR Transit provides some transportation in Ellis County including Medicaid transportation and contracted service for older adults who have doctor's appointments in Dallas County. The closest fixed-route transit service to Ellis County is an express bus operated by DART that links Glenn Heights park and ride, just across the county line, with downtown Dallas. Commuter vanpools are another option in Ellis County through DART and the Fort Worth Transportation Authority (FWTA). In total, 15 vanpools originate in Ellis County, with 1 vanpool traveling to Ellis County.

See Appendix B4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

OUTREACH MEETING

A joint public meeting for Ellis County and Navarro

County took place at Navarro College in Waxahachie on November 9, 2016. 174 invitations were mailed and emailed to interested parties throughout the county. Meeting announcements and information were also posted online, and invitees were encouraged to share the invitation with partner organizations and clients to help promote the meetings. A total of 24 people attended the meeting.

Following a general welcome and presentation about public transit within the county, staff led an interactive keypad polling session to instigate discussion of transportation issues with attendees. Based on discussion question answers, community members prioritized current issues in the county and re-prioritized strategies from the 2013 Access North Texas Plan.

Comments and discussion identified that Ellis County currently does not have enough public transportation to meet the existing needs. Furthermore, many residents (including veterans) do not know about the existing public transportation resources. Attendees noted that trips to Dallas for medical appointments, trips to work, and education opportunities are the highest transit needs within Ellis County. Access to employment for individuals working the third shift is especially difficult since there isn't any public transportation provided during these hours. Lastly, attendees noted that trips into Dallas-Fort Worth (or even within the county) can be cost prohibitive for riders with limited incomes.

TRANSPORTATION POLL

A transportation poll was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper, and available in English and Spanish. The poll collected first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations. Individual poll data revealed personal experiences with transportation. Polls completed by organizations on behalf of their clients explained issues seen by advocates of the people served by each organization. Both forms of the poll provide personal views of the public transportation system. Respon-

dents totaled 22 from Ellis County.

41% of individuals indicated that they get a ride with a friend or family member while 55% of respondents said they use a bus or van of a community organization or other agency. Only 32% indicated they use existing public transit. The transportation services that sounded most appealing to poll takers were local bus service and community-wide dial-a-ride service. Poll responders identified that the available level of transportation isn't meeting the need. Additional capacity is needed as well as better internal connections to Midlothian, Ennis and Waxahachie. Transit service on Saturday evenings and Sundays would improve quality of life. Improved regional connections to Dallas County and Tarrant County are also needed.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders thought should be implemented over the next few years. These strategies build upon the progress that has taken place since the 2013 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Ellis County Prioritized Strategies

Ellis Strategy 1 Improve local and regional access to medical appointments in Dallas County

Ellis Strategy 2 Improve transportation options for local access to job and education opportunities

Ellis Strategy 3 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Ellis Strategy 4 Expand transportation services to provide service for late-shift workers

Ellis Strategy 5 Explore partnerships with local employers, medical centers, cities, and other agencies to fund additional transit services

Ellis Strategy 6 Conduct targeted marketing to local agencies about existing transportation resources, including transit resources for veterans

Ellis Strategy 7 Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year

to ensure public transportation resources are up-to-date

Ellis Strategy 8 Create and maintain a coordinating committee to discuss ongoing transportation needs

Ellis Strategy 9 Explore partnerships with existing transportation providers to reduce the number of transfers for regional trips

Ellis Strategy 10 Establish consistent and effective driver recruitment and retention programs for public transportation services to address difficulties in retaining drivers in Ellis County

Regional Strategies for Coordinated Public Transportation

Much like the county strategies, the regional strategies may also be applicable to Ellis County.

Regional Strategy 1 In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit

Regional Strategy 2 Continue and expand projects that have a no-wrong-door approach to accessing transit or information about available transit

Regional Strategy 3 Create partnerships to simplify regional trips and reduce the number of transfers between providers

Regional Strategy 4 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Regional Strategy 5 Work towards uniform, regional fares to simplify and reduce the cost of regional trips for riders

Regional Strategy 6 Advocate to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Regional Strategy 7 Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate non-traditional ways to deliver public transportation service, including partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, and transportation network companies

Regional Strategy 8 Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transit

through leadership or policy initiatives and to advocate for increasing investment in public transit

Implementing the Plan

Transportation providers and local stakeholders will collaborate to determine next steps, form needed partnerships, identify and pursue funding, and ultimately implement selected strategies. Organizations that want to implement a strategy listed in this plan will need to develop strong partnerships with transportation providers, stakeholder agencies, communities, and counties. NCTCOG staff is available to help organizations identify potential partners and coordination opportunities. Organizations should also identify potential funding sources, which can be a mix of private and public funds, including funds from local, state, and federal sources. Local funds from public and private sources are important to demonstrate a community or organizational commitment to implementing specific strategies. Local funds are especially important to leverage state and federal dollars. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and NCTCOG have regular calls for projects to award federal funds that support projects and strategies listed in this plan.

Characteristics of a highly competitive project:

- Is multi-year. A three year request is recommended for projects providing transit service;
- Identifies an existing public transit provider or existing non-profit transportation provider when proposing to provide transit service; Targets individuals with lower incomes for requests of Urbanized Area Formula Program (Job Access/Reverse Commute projects) funds;
- Targets older adults and individuals with disabilities for requests of Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds; and
- Supports one or more strategies outlined in this plan.

If a project is funded through NCTCOG or TxDOT, staff will document the project funding in the Transportation Improvement Program, coordinate necessary approvals, develop contract agreements, and work with implementing agencies to manage the project and all compliance activities associated with federal or state funding.

APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Ellis County, please see Appendix C-Ellis, available online at www.accessnorthtexas.org. The Public Transportation Toolbox (see Appendix B-3) highlights transit services that can be implemented in the near term to meet specific needs within Ellis County.

See Appendix B-4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix B-5, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed.

See Appendix B-6, Transportation Poll, for more information about the transportation poll.

ERATH COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to improve public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. These populations can have difficulty finding public transportation options that connect them to doctor's appointments, work opportunities and education or job training. This plan identifies where these transportation connections do not exist or could be improved within Erath County. This chapter will give an overview of the planning process, the research conducted and collected, the public outreach meeting, the transportation poll used to collect personal input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Erath County.

PROCESS

This plan is required by federal guidance to be updated every four years. The plan must be developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors; individuals with disabilities; representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation; human services providers and other members of the public. The plan is updated to address current public transportation needs of the residents of Erath County. Through the process and methods described, prioritized strategies were developed so that future public transportation projects can be implemented when federal and state funding becomes available. Two different types of research were conducted during this plan update: data-based and people-based.

Data-based research included obtaining, reviewing, and analyzing Census data; using Census data to

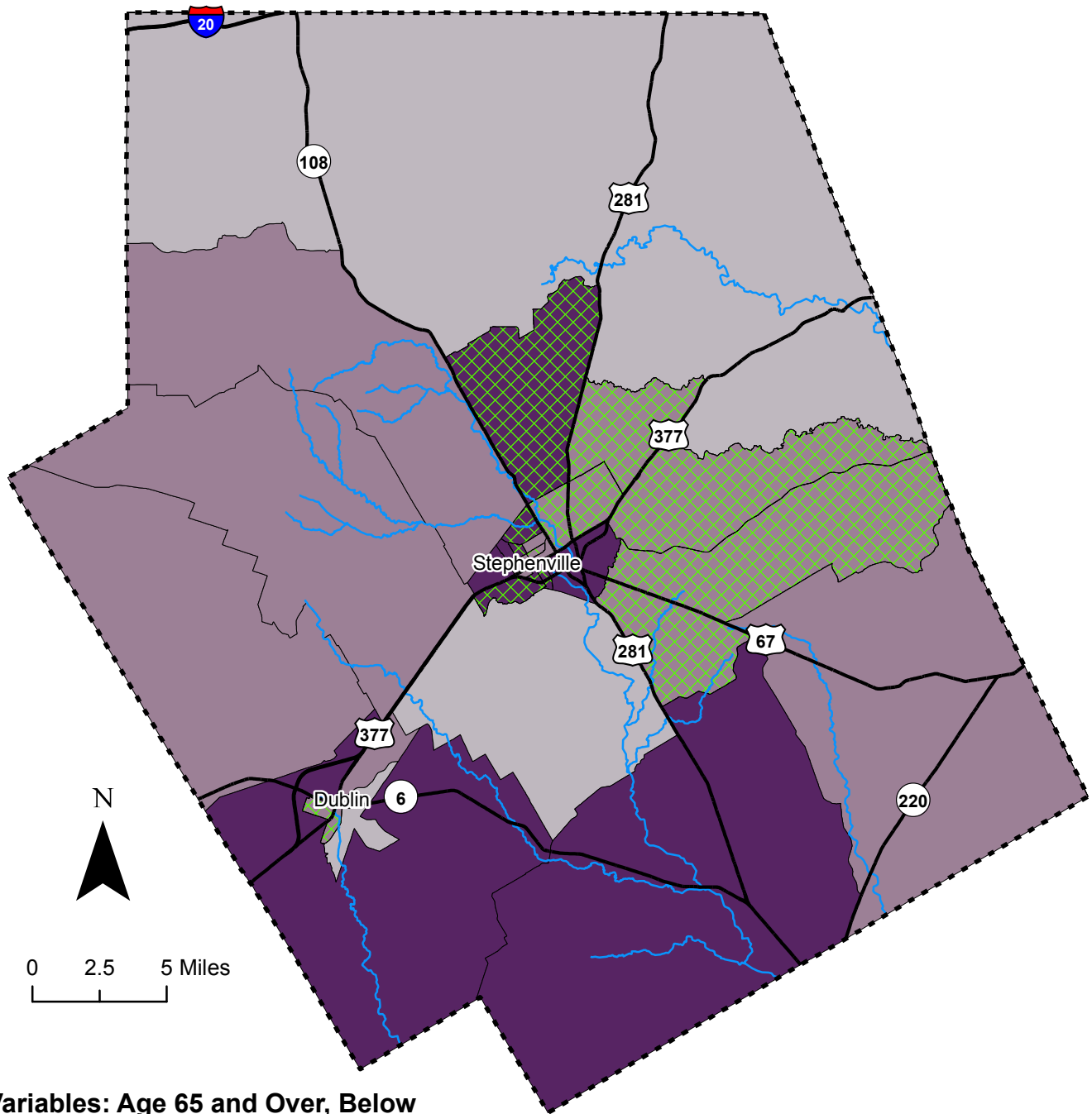
develop a mapping tool to identify locations where transit-dependent individuals may live; and identifying existing public transportation providers. The people-based research included reaching out to communities, organizations, and individuals to obtain feedback about the existing public transportation system and how it could be improved. Feedback was obtained through a public outreach meeting and a transportation poll. Through an interactive process stakeholders prioritized concerns about transit access.

RESEARCH






The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

The TAIT was developed to identify locations with certain demographic factors that may indicate a greater need for public transportation. The populations of individuals over age 65, residents below the poverty line, and persons with disabilities were each compared to the regional percentage of the population in that demographic. A map was created based on areas that were above the regional percentage in zero, one, two, or all three of the demographic categories. The more categories that an area is deemed above the regional percentage, the more likely it is that area is to need transit. Zero car households was provided as a supplemental layer to identify households above the regional percentage that do not having a working vehicle available. The tool is useful in identifying groups of people who could benefit from transit services, but is not intended to be the deciding factor in decisions regarding public transportation.

Erath County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

-  All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
-  One Variable Above Regional Percentage
-  Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  All Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

In Erath County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentages. The areas with all three variables above the regional percentage are located along the SH 108 and US 377 corridors in Stephenville and along the SH 6 corridor in the southern part of the county. Within Stephenville and Dublin, the census block groups with two variables above the regional percentage have higher levels of persons below the poverty line and persons with disabilities. The same is true for the census block groups east of Stephenville along US 67, east of SH 108 to the northwest of Stephenville, and the two block groups north of US 377 directly west of Stephenville. The census block groups northwest and northeast of Dublin are higher than regional percentage in persons age 65 and over and persons with disabilities, as is the large census block group northeast of Stephenville between US 281 and US 377, and the large census block group bisected by US 67 and SH 220 in southeastern Erath County. The rural census block groups with one variable above the regional percentage are block groups with higher amounts of persons age 65 and over, with the census block group in Dublin along SH 6 being higher in persons with disabilities. There are no census block groups at or below the regional percentage in Erath County. Areas where households without cars are above the regional percentage are predominantly in and around Stephenville, with a similar block group in western Dublin.

Additional Demographic and Commuter Information

Erath County continues to experience a steady amount of growth. According to the American Community Survey's 2015 5-year estimates, since the 2010 Census, Erath County's population has increased by 5.7%. In comparison, the 16-county region has grown 6.3% in that same time period. Public transportation needs will change as the population grows. Within Erath County, 7.1% of residents speak English less than very well. Efforts to promote existing or new transit

services should include strategies to reach this population.

According to U.S. Census employer information as of 2014, Erath County is home to approximately 14,000 jobs, with about half of workers living in the county, and the other half commuting into the county. Around half of those commuting into the county are entering from the northeast. Approximately 8,000 workers live in Erath County and commute out to other counties for work. Only 40% of workers in the county live within 10 miles of work. The economy is somewhat diverse in the county, with 18% of jobs in educational services, and three other sectors each containing approximately 10% of the workforce. The workforce is fairly educated, with around one third of workers having at least some college education or an Associate Degree.

Transportation Resources

The main public transportation provider, City and Rural Rides (also known as CARR), serves the general public and provides shared-ride service in which passengers ride along while others are picked up and dropped off. CARR's vehicles can accommodate mobility devices. CARR started a partnership with Tarleton State University in 2014, providing free shuttle services to assist students and employees traveling between off-campus apartment complexes, remote parking lots and the university's Stephenville campus. The program features a live tracking service to inform users of the shuttle's location and estimated arrival times, which can be accessed through its website or mobile app. Other resources that may play a role in coordinating transportation are Erath County Senior Citizens, Inc. and volunteer veterans' transportation services. The Fort Worth Transportation Authority (FWTA) offers commuter vanpools and one FWTA vanpool currently originates in Erath County.

See Appendix B4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for

personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

OUTREACH MEETING

The public meeting for Erath County was held as a joint public meeting with Hood County and Somervell County on February 15, 2017 at the Hood County Library in Granbury. 148 invitations were mailed and emailed to interested parties throughout the counties. Meeting announcements and information were also posted online, and invitees were encouraged to share the invitation with partner organizations and clients to help promote the meetings. In all, 31 community members from Erath County, Hood County, and Somervell County were present at the meeting to provide feedback on transit priorities for each county.

Following a general welcome and presentation about public transit within the county, staff led an interactive keypad polling session to instigate discussion of transportation issues with attendees. Based on discussion question answers, community members prioritized current issues in the county and re-prioritized strategies from the 2013 Access North Texas Plan.

Comments and discussion during the outreach meeting identified that out-of-county medical trips (to both Tarrant County and Dallas County) and return trips home are difficult to schedule due to distance and availability. Regarding medical trips, attendees also noted that trips to the Veterans Affairs Hospitals are a high need for their clients. Additional capacity and funding is needed to accommodate the existing demand for public transportation. Attendees also noted that even trips within the county can be cost prohibitive for riders with limited incomes.

TRANSPORTATION POLL

A transportation poll was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper, and available in English and Spanish. The poll collected first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations. Individual poll data revealed per-

sonal experiences with transportation. Polls completed by organizations on behalf of their clients explained issues seen by advocates of the people served by each organization. Both forms of the poll provide personal views of the public transportation system.

Erath County residents submitted three responses to the transportation poll. The average age of the respondents was 73, with the youngest 62 and oldest 86. Two of the three respondents said they ride the bus or van of a community organization or other agency. One of the three respondents also said they either drive themselves, get a ride from friends or family members, or walk for their transportation needs. Each respondent noted they missed trips in the previous six months, with two respondents missing religious activities, and one missing social or entertainment events and shopping trips. All three respondents cited not having a car as the reason trips get missed, with one respondent citing interest in local bus service and community to community bus service.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders thought should be implemented over the next few years. These strategies build upon the progress that has taken place since the 2013 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Erath County Prioritized Strategies

Erath Strategy 1 Improve access to Veterans Affairs facilities in Dallas and Fort Worth

Erath Strategy 2 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Erath Strategy 3 Add capacity to existing transit service to accommodate:

1. Local and regional medical appointments
2. Local job opportunities and training
3. General purpose trips (groceries, recreation, dining)

4. Weekend trips
5. Emergent transportation needs

Erath Strategy 4 Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure public transportation resources are up-to-date

Erath Strategy 5 Conduct targeted marketing to local agencies about available transportation services and resources

Erath Strategy 6 Explore partnerships with local employers, cities, and other agencies to fund additional transit services

Erath Strategy 7 Conduct travel training to teach riders how to use public transportation

Regional Strategies

Much like the county strategies, the regional strategies may also be applicable to Erath County.

Regional Strategy 1 In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit

Regional Strategy 2 Continue and expand projects that have a no-wrong-door approach to accessing transit or information about available transit

Regional Strategy 3 Create partnerships to simplify regional trips and reduce the number of transfers between providers

Regional Strategy 4 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Regional Strategy 5 Work towards uniform, regional fares to simplify and reduce the cost of regional trips for riders

Regional Strategy 6 Advocate to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Regional Strategy 7 Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate non-traditional ways to deliver public transportation service, including partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, and transportation network companies

Regional Strategy 8 Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transit through leadership or policy initiatives and to advocate for increasing investment in public transit

Implementing the Plan

Transportation providers and local stakeholders will collaborate to determine next steps, form needed partnerships, identify and pursue funding, and ultimately implement selected strategies. Organizations that want to implement a strategy listed in this plan will need to develop strong partnerships with transportation providers, stakeholder agencies, communities, and counties. NCTCOG staff is available to help organizations identify potential partners and coordination opportunities. Organizations should also identify potential funding sources, which can be a mix of private and public funds, including funds from local, state, and federal sources. Local funds from public and private sources are important to demonstrate a community or organizational commitment to implementing specific strategies. Local funds are especially important to leverage state and federal dollars. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and NCTCOG have regular calls for projects to award federal funds that support projects and strategies listed in this plan.

Characteristics of a highly competitive project:

- Is multi-year. A three year request is recommended for projects providing transit service;
- Identifies an existing public transit provider or existing non-profit transportation provider when proposing to provide transit service;
- Targets individuals with lower incomes for requests of Urbanized Area Formula Program (Job Access/Reverse Commute projects) funds;
- Targets older adults and individuals with disabilities for requests of Enhanced Mobility of Seniors

and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds;
and

- Supports one or more strategies outlined in this plan.

If a project is funded through NCTCOG or Tx-DOT, staff will document the project funding in the Transportation Improvement Program, coordinate necessary approvals, develop contract agreements, and work with implementing agencies to manage the project and all compliance activities associated with federal or state funding.

APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Erath County, please see Appendix C-Erath, available online at www.accessnorthtexas.org. The Public Transportation Toolbox (see Appendix B-3) highlights transit services that can be implemented in the near term to meet specific needs within Erath County.

See Appendix B-4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix B-5, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed.

See Appendix B-6, Transportation Poll, for more information about the transportation poll.

HOOD COUNTY & SOMERVELL COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to improve public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. These populations can have difficulty finding public transportation options that connect them to doctor's appointments, work opportunities and education or job training. This plan identifies where these transportation connections do not exist or could be improved within Hood County and Somervell County. This chapter will give an overview of the planning process, the research conducted and collected, the public outreach meeting, the transportation poll used to collect personal input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Hood County and Somervell County.

PROCESS

This plan is required by federal guidance to be updated every four years. The plan must be developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors; individuals with disabilities; representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation; human services providers and other members of the public. The plan is updated to address current public transportation needs of the residents of Hood County and Somervell County. Through the process and methods described, prioritized strategies were developed so that future public transportation projects can be implemented when federal and state funding becomes available. Two different types of research were conducted during this plan update: data-based and people-based.

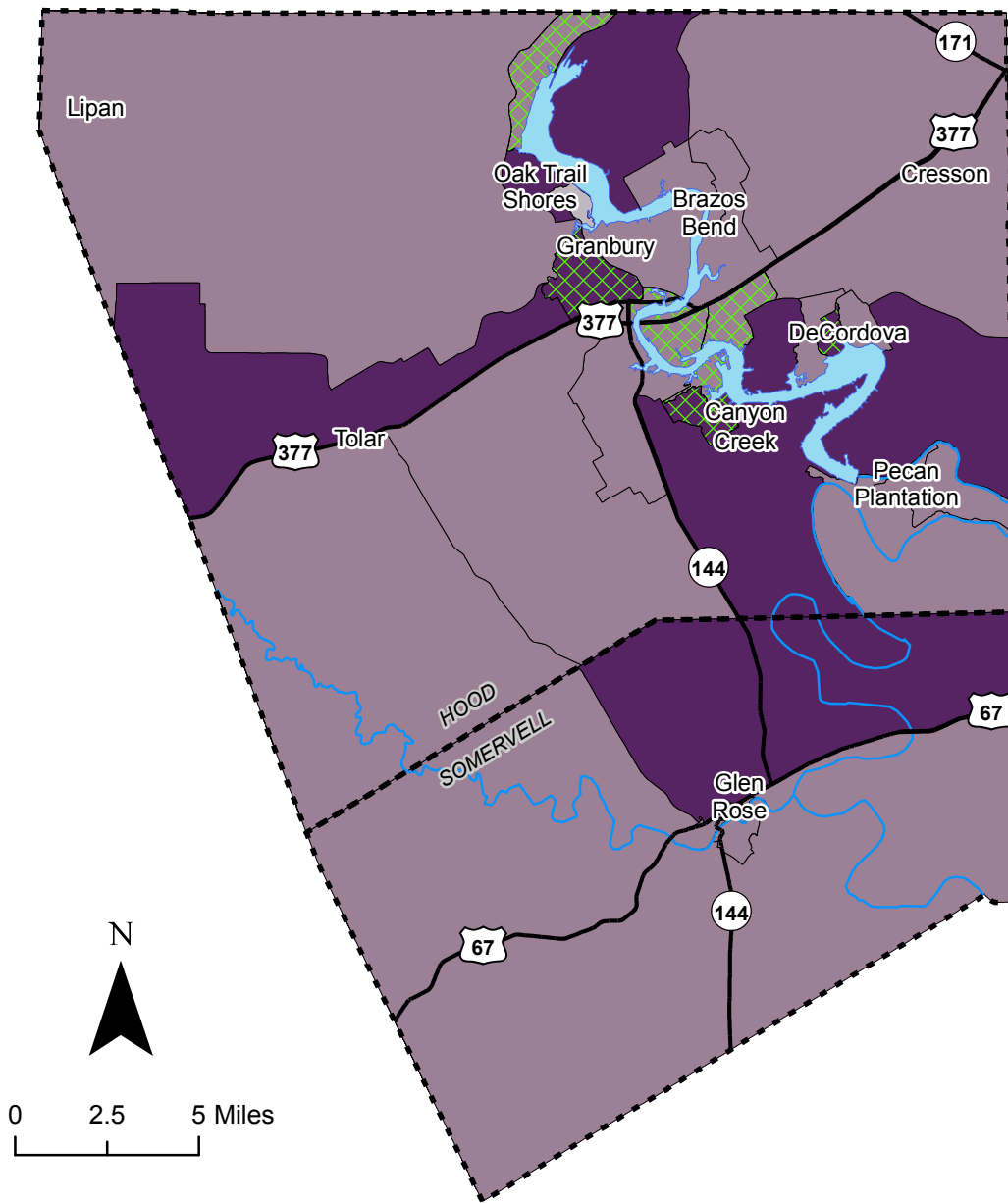
Data-based research included obtaining, reviewing, and analyzing Census data; using Census data to develop a mapping tool to identify locations where transit-dependent individuals may live; and identifying existing public transportation providers. The people-based research included reaching out to communities, organizations, and individuals to obtain feedback about the existing public transportation system and how it could be improved. Feedback was obtained through a public outreach meeting and a transportation poll. Through an interactive process, stakeholders prioritized concerns about transit access.

RESEARCH






The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

The TAIT was developed to identify locations with certain demographic factors that may indicate a greater need for public transportation. The populations of individuals over age 65, residents below the poverty line, and persons with disabilities were each compared to the regional percentage of the population in that demographic. A map was created based on areas that were above the regional percentage in zero, one, two, or all three of the demographic categories. The more categories that an area is deemed above the regional percentage, the more likely it is that area is to need transit. Zero car households was provided as a supplemental layer to identify households above the regional percentage that do not have a working vehicle available. The tool is useful in identifying groups of people who could benefit from transit services, but is not intended to be the deciding factor in decisions regarding public transportation.

Hood and Somervell Counties Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

-  All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
-  One Variable Above Regional Percentage
-  Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  All Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



In Hood County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentage. Census block groups with all three variables above the regional percentage are in and northeast of Oak Trail Shores, north of US 377 in Granbury, in and east of Canyon Creek, and in DeCordova. All census block groups with two variables greater than the regional percentage in Hood County are higher than regional percentage in persons age 65 and over and persons with disabilities. The lone block group in Oak Trail Shores with one variable higher than regional percentage is persons with disabilities. There are no census block groups with all three variables at or below the regional percentage. Zero car households above the regional percentage are mainly in central Hood County along the US 377 corridor in Granbury, Canyon Creek, and DeCordova areas. There is also a census block north of Oak Trail Shores that is higher than the regional percentage for zero car households.

Somervell County's lone census block with all three variables above the regional percentage is north of US 67 near Glen Rose. The other two census block groups in the county are above the regional percentage in persons age 65 and over and persons with disabilities. There no block groups with zero or one variable above the regional percentage, and no block groups above the regional percentage for zero car households.

Additional Demographic and Commuter Information

Hood County and Somervell County continue to experience a steady amount of growth. According to the American Community Survey's 2015 5-year estimates, since the 2010 Census, Hood County's population has increased by 3.9% while Somervell County's population has increased by 1.4%. In comparison, the 16-county region has grown 6.3% in that same time period. Public transportation needs will change as the population grows. Within Hood County

and Somervell County, 3.7% and 7.4% of residents, respectively, speak English less than very well. Efforts to promote existing or new transit services should include strategies to reach this population.

According to U.S. Census employer information data as of 2014, Hood County is home to around 15,000 jobs, with a little over 6,000 employees living in the county. Approximately 9,000 workers commute into the county, while 15,000 commute out of the county for work. 38% of workers in Hood County live within 10 miles of their jobs, while the majority of employees commuting into the county are from the east and northeast. Hood County is somewhat diversified in their economy and around 1 in 5 jobs in Hood County are in the mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction industry. Approximately 4 in 10 workers in the county have either some college experience or a degree.

Somervell County is home to around 4,000 jobs, with only 1,000 workers living within the county. Around 3,000 workers commute into the county for work, while approximately 2,500 commute out of the county. Only 1,300 workers live within 10 miles of their jobs in Somervell County, with the majority of commuters into the county entering from the north and northeast. The economy is not overly diverse, as around 30% of the jobs are in either the utilities or construction industries. The workforce is fairly well educated in Somervell County, with around 50% of workers in the county having some college experience or a degree.

Transportation Resources

The Transit System provides public transportation in Hood County and Somervell County, which serves the general public including older adults and individuals with disabilities. The Fort Worth Transportation Authority (FWTA) also operates commuter vanpools in both counties. Four vanpools originate in Hood County, while five vanpools have a destination of Somervell County.

See Appendix B4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

Because of the smaller geography and smaller populations of Hood County and Somervell County, creative solutions to transportation challenges will likely require the participation of a variety of community partners, including some that may not have been involved in transportation in the past.

OUTREACH MEETING

The public meeting for Hood County and Somervell County was held as a joint public meeting with Erath County, on February 15, 2017 at the Hood County Library in Granbury. 148 invitations were mailed and emailed to interested parties throughout the counties. Meeting announcements and information were also posted online, and invitees were encouraged to share the invitation with partner organizations and clients to help promote the meetings. In all, 31 community members from Erath County, Hood County, and Somervell County were present at the meeting to provide feedback on transit priorities for each county.

Following a general welcome and presentation about public transit within the county, staff led an interactive keypad polling session to instigate discussion of transportation issues with attendees. Based on discussion question answers, community members prioritized current issues in the county and re-prioritized strategies from the 2013 Access North Texas Plan.

Comments and discussion during the outreach meeting identified that out-of-county medical trips (to both Tarrant County and Dallas County) and return trips home are difficult to schedule due to distance and availability. Regarding medical trips, attendees also noted that trips to the Veterans Affairs Hospitals are a high need for their clients. Additional capacity and funding is needed to accommodate the existing

demand for public transportation. Attendees also noted that even trips within the county can be cost prohibitive for riders with limited incomes. The Transit System, the public transportation provider in Hood County and Somervell County, noted that recruiting and retaining drivers has been a challenge due to the time needed to train and onboard a new driver. Lastly, better information about available transit services and the populations they serve is necessary. The Transit System identified that many residents don't understand that their transportation service is available to the general public, not just older adults and individuals with disabilities.

TRANSPORTATION POLL

A transportation poll was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper, and available in English and Spanish. The poll collected first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations. Individual poll data revealed personal experiences with transportation. Polls completed by organizations on behalf of their clients explained issues seen by advocates of the people served by each organization. Both forms of the poll provide personal views of the public transportation system.

There were no responses to the transportation poll from residents of Hood County or Somervell County.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders thought should be implemented over the next few years. These strategies build upon the progress that has taken place since the 2013 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Hood County and Somervell County Prioritized Strategies

Strategy 1 Improve access to Veterans Affairs facilities in Dallas and Fort Worth

Strategy 2 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Strategy 3 Add capacity to existing transit service to accommodate:

1. Local and regional medical appointments
2. Local job opportunities and training
3. General purpose trips (groceries, recreation, dining)
4. Weekend trips
5. Emergent transportation needs

Strategy 4 Establish consistent and effective driver recruitment and retention programs for public transportation services to address difficulties in retaining drivers in Hood County and Somervell County

Strategy 5 Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure public transportation resources are up-to-date

Strategy 6 Conduct targeted marketing to local agencies about available transportation services and resources

Strategy 7 Explore partnerships with local employers, cities, and other agencies to fund additional transit services

Strategy 8 Conduct travel training to teach riders how to use public transportation

Regional Strategies for Coordinated Public Transportation

Much like the county strategies, the regional strategies may also be applicable to Hood and Somervell County.

Regional Strategy 1 In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit

Regional Strategy 2 Continue and expand projects that have a no-wrong-door approach to accessing transit or information about available transit

Regional Strategy 3 Create partnerships to simplify regional trips and reduce the number of transfers between providers

Regional Strategy 4 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Regional Strategy 5 Work towards uniform, regional fares to simplify and reduce the cost of regional trips for riders

Regional Strategy 6 Advocate to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Regional Strategy 7 Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate non-traditional ways to deliver public transportation service, including partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, and transportation network companies

Regional Strategy 8 Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transit through leadership or policy initiatives and to advocate for increasing investment in public transit

Implementing the Plan

Transportation providers and local stakeholders will collaborate to determine next steps, form needed partnerships, identify and pursue funding, and ultimately implement selected strategies. Organizations that want to implement a strategy listed in this plan will need to develop strong partnerships with transportation providers, stakeholder agencies, communities, and counties. NCTCOG staff is available to help organizations identify potential partners and coordination opportunities. Organizations should also identify potential funding sources, which can be a mix of private and public funds, including funds from local, state, and federal sources. Local funds from public and private sources are important to demonstrate a community or organizational commitment to implementing specific strategies. Local funds are especially important to leverage state and federal dollars. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and NCTCOG have regular calls for projects to award federal funds that support projects and strategies listed in this plan.

Characteristics of a highly competitive project:

- Is multi-year. A three year request is recommended for projects providing transit service;
- Identifies an existing public transit provider or existing non-profit transportation provider when proposing to provide transit service;
- Targets individuals with lower incomes for requests of Urbanized Area Formula Program (Job Access/Reverse Commute projects) funds;
- Targets older adults and individuals with disabilities for requests of Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds; and
- Supports one or more strategies outlined in this plan.

If a project is funded through NCTCOG or TxDOT, staff will document the project funding in the Transportation Improvement Program, coordinate necessary approvals, develop contract agreements, and work with implementing agencies to manage the project and all compliance activities associated with federal or state funding.

APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Hood County and Somervell County, please see Appendix C-Hood and Somervell, available online at www.accessnorthtexas.org. The Public Transportation Toolbox (see Appendix B-3) highlights transit services that can be implemented in the near term to meet specific needs within Hood County and Somervell County.

See Appendix B-4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix B-5, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed.

See Appendix B-6, Transportation Poll, for more information about the transportation poll.

HUNT COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to improve public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. These populations can have difficulty finding public transportation options that connect them to doctor's appointments, work opportunities and education or job training. This plan identifies where these transportation connections do not exist or could be improved within Hunt County. This chapter will give an overview of the planning process, research conducted and collected, the public outreach meeting, the transportation poll used to collect personal input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Hunt County.

PROCESS

This plan is required by federal guidance to be updated every four years. The plan must be developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors; individuals with disabilities; representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation; human services providers and other members of the public. The plan is updated to address current public transportation needs of the residents of Hunt County. Through the process and methods described, prioritized strategies were developed so that future public transportation projects can be implemented when federal and state funding becomes available. Two different types of research were conducted during this plan update: data-based and people-based.

Data-based research included obtaining, reviewing, and analyzing Census data; using Census data to develop a mapping tool to identify locations where transit-dependent individuals may live; and identi-

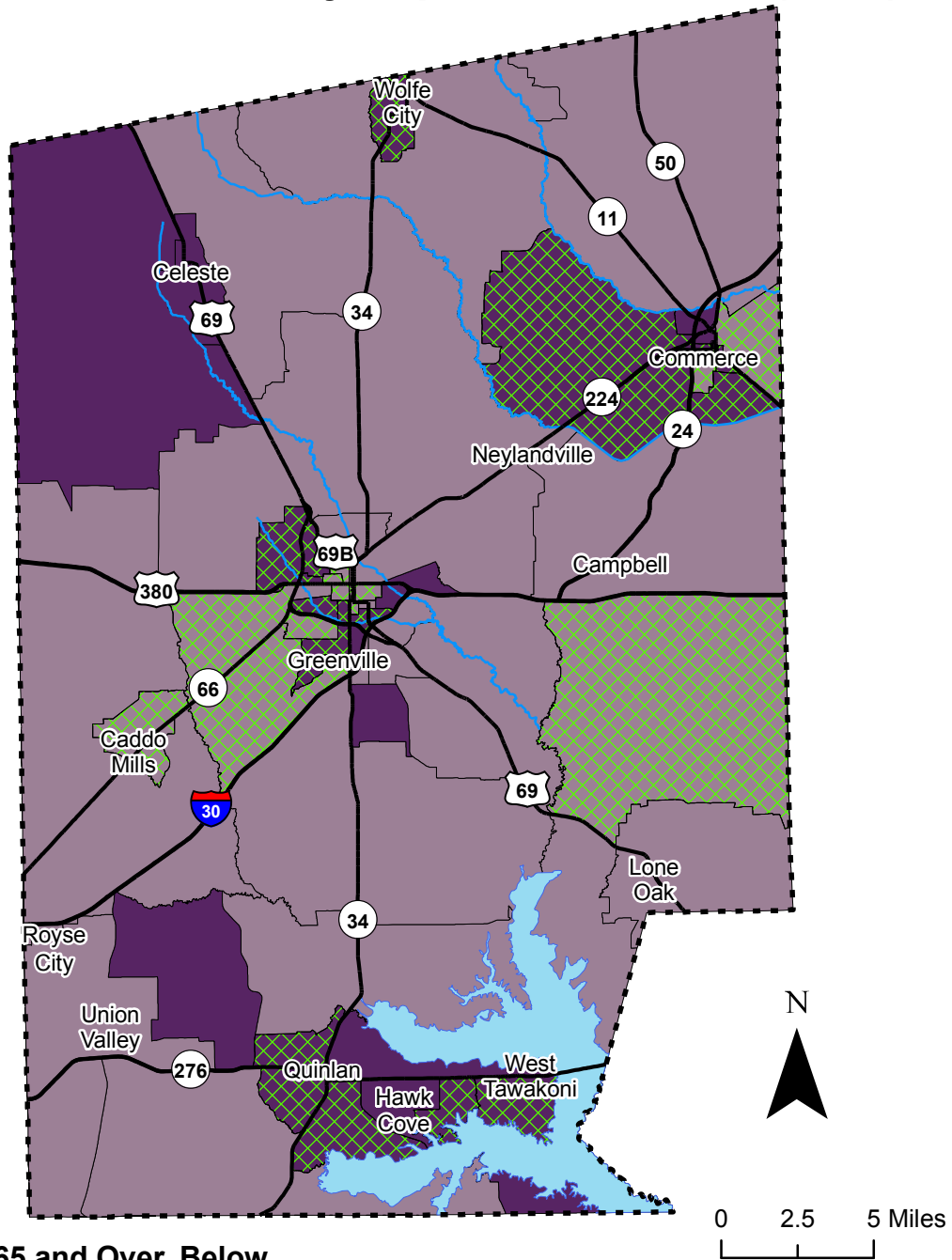
fying existing public transportation providers. The people-based research included reaching out to communities, organizations, and individuals to obtain feedback about the existing public transportation system and how it could be improved. Feedback was obtained through a public outreach meeting and a transportation poll. Through an interactive process, stakeholders prioritized concerns about transit access.

RESEARCH






The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

The TAIT was developed to identify locations with certain demographic factors that may indicate a greater need for public transportation. The populations of individuals over age 65, residents below the poverty line, and persons with disabilities were each compared to the regional percentage of the population in that demographic. A map was created based on areas that were above the regional percentage in zero, one, two, or all three of the demographic categories. The more categories that an area is deemed above the regional percentage, the more likely it is that area is to need transit. Zero car households was provided as a supplemental layer to identify households above the regional percentage that do not having a working vehicle available. The tool is useful in identifying groups of people who could benefit from transit services, but is not intended to be the deciding factor in decisions regarding public transportation.

Hunt County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

-  All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
-  One Variable Above Regional Percentage
-  Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  All Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

In Hunt County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentages. The areas with all three variables are dispersed throughout the county, mainly around incorporated cities and towns rather than more rural areas, including west of US 69 in Celeste, Wolfe City, Commerce, along SH 34 in Greenville, and along the SH 279 corridor that runs through the cities of Quinlan, Hawk Cove, and West Tawakoni. The remainder of the county has two of the three variables above the regional percentage. All census block groups except for the block groups north of Caddo Mills between SH 66 and US 380, one north of Greenville between US Business 69 and SH 34, and one east of SH 50 in Commerce have persons age 65 and over and persons with disabilities as the two variables above the regional percentage. The census block groups listed previously are above the regional percentage in persons below the poverty line and persons with disabilities. There are no census block groups in the county with zero or one variable above the regional percentage. Zero car households above the regional percentage are in Wolfe City, Commerce, mostly west of SH 34 in Greenville, and along the SH 276 corridor in Quinlan and West Tawakoni. There is also a rural census block south of US 380 and east of US 69 above the regional percentage for zero car households. All of Hunt County has a higher proportion of persons with a disability than the 16-county region. Additionally, the highest proportions of persons with disabilities live within Greenville and Commerce.

Additional Demographic and Commuter Information

Hunt County continues to experience a steady amount of growth. According to the American Community Survey's 2015 5-year estimates, since the 2010 Census, Hunt County's U.S. Census' population has increased by 2.2%. In comparison, the 16-county region has grown 6.3% in that same time period. Public transportation needs will change as the population grows. Within Hunt County, 5.4% of residents speak

English less than very well. Efforts to promote existing or new transit services should include strategies to reach this population.

According to U.S. Census employer information as of 2014, Hunt County is home to approximately 26,000 jobs, with 11,500 of those workers living within the county. Around 14,500 commuters enter Hunt County for work, while almost 22,000 leave the county for work. Around one-third of workers in Hunt County live within ten miles of their jobs, with the majority of commuters entering the county from the west and southwest. The economy is not overly diverse in Hunt County, with nearly 25% of jobs in the county in construction alone. The county's workforce is fairly well educated, with about 45% of the workforce having some college experience or a degree.

Transportation Resources

The main public transportation provider in Hunt County is The Connection, operated by Senior Center Resources and Public Transit, which serves the general public, including older adults and individuals with disabilities. The Connection operates a commuter route connecting Greenville to Dallas Area Rapid Transit's light rail system at Downtown Rowlett Station, which is the terminus of the Blue Line. This service provides a regional transportation link to the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) also operates vanpools in Hunt County, with 13 vanpools going to Hunt County as their destination. Texas A&M University – Commerce also operates two shuttle routes (known as Pride Ride) to help students, faculty and staff get around campus.

See Appendix B4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

OUTREACH MEETING

A public meeting for Hunt County took place at

Senior Center Resources and Public Transit in Greenville on September 20, 2016. 106 invitations were mailed and emailed to interested parties throughout the county. Meeting announcements and information were also posted online, and invitees were encouraged to share the invitation with partner organizations and clients to help promote the meetings. A total of 24 people attended the meeting.

Following a general welcome and presentation about public transit within the county, staff led an interactive keypad polling session to instigate discussion of transportation issues with attendees. Based on discussion question answers, community members prioritized current issues in the county and re-prioritized strategies from the 2013 Access North Texas Plan.

Comments and discussion during the Hunt County outreach meeting identified that many community members were not aware of the available public transportation options. For individuals that do know about The Connection, there is still confusion about how to use the service, cost of the trip, and how to schedule a trip in order to arrive to an appointment on time. Attendees also noted that regional connections to Dallas County and Denton County for medical appointments and work opportunities were difficult. The service connecting Greenville to the Downtown Rowlett Station was not operating at the time of the outreach meeting, but started in October of 2016.

TRANSPORTATION POLL

A transportation poll was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper, and available in English and Spanish. The poll collected first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations. Individual poll data revealed personal experiences with transportation. Polls completed by organizations on behalf of their clients explained issues seen by advocates of the people served by each organization. Both forms of the poll provide personal views of the public transportation system.

In Hunt County, four residents submitted responses to the transportation poll. The average age of the respondents is 49, with the youngest 22 and the oldest 67. Three of the four respondents said they drive themselves, and two stated they get a ride with a friend or family member for their transportation needs. Three of the four respondents cited they had not missed any trips in the previous six months, with one respondent missing religious activities, social or entertainment events, and shopping trips. The one respondent who missed trips noted they do not have a car available for use and that public transportation does not meet their needs. Two respondents would be interested in both local bus service and community wide dial-a-ride services.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders thought should be implemented over the next few years. These strategies build upon the progress that has taken place since the 2013 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Hunt County Prioritized Strategies

Hunt Strategy 1 Improve awareness of available public transportation services and how to use them

Hunt Strategy 2 Create and maintain a coordinating committee to discuss ongoing transportation needs

Hunt Strategy 3 Improve regional connections to Dallas County and Collin County, particularly for medical appointments and work opportunities

Hunt Strategy 4 Continue to explore partnerships with nonprofits, private companies, and others to increase service within the county

Hunt Strategy 5 Reduce scheduling pick-up windows

Regional Strategies for Coordinated Public Transportation

Much like the county strategies, the regional strategies

may also be applicable to Hunt County.

Regional Strategy 1 In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit

Regional Strategy 2 Continue and expand projects that have a no-wrong-door approach to accessing transit or information about available transit

Regional Strategy 3 Create partnerships to simplify regional trips and reduce the number of transfers between providers

Regional Strategy 4 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Regional Strategy 5 Work towards uniform, regional fares to simplify and reduce the cost of regional trips for riders

Regional Strategy 6 Advocate to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Regional Strategy 7 Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate non-traditional ways to deliver public transportation service, including partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, and transportation network companies

Regional Strategy 8 Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transit through leadership or policy initiatives and to advocate for increasing investment in public transit

Implementing the Plan

Transportation providers and local stakeholders will collaborate to determine next steps, form needed partnerships, identify and pursue funding, and ultimately implement selected strategies. Organizations that want to implement a strategy listed in this plan will need to develop strong partnerships with transportation providers, stakeholder agencies, communities, and counties. NCTCOG staff is available to help organizations identify potential partners and coordination opportunities. Organizations should also identify potential funding sources, which can be a mix of

private and public funds, including funds from local, state, and federal sources. Local funds from public and private sources are important to demonstrate a community or organizational commitment to implementing specific strategies. Local funds are especially important to leverage state and federal dollars. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and NCTCOG have regular calls for projects to award federal funds that support projects and strategies listed in this plan.

Characteristics of a highly competitive project:

- Is multi-year. A three year request is recommended for projects providing transit service;
- Identifies an existing public transit provider or existing non-profit transportation provider when proposing to provide transit service;
- Targets individuals with lower incomes for requests of Urbanized Area Formula Program (Job Access/Reverse Commute projects) funds;
- Targets older adults and individuals with disabilities for requests of Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds; and
- Supports one or more strategies outlined in this plan.

If a project is funded through NCTCOG or TxDOT, staff will document the project funding in the Transportation Improvement Program, coordinate necessary approvals, develop contract agreements, and work with implementing agencies to manage the project and all compliance activities associated with federal or state funding.

APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Hunt County, please see Appendix C-Hunt, available online at www.accessnorthtexas.org. The Public Transportation Toolbox (see Appendix B-3) highlights transit services that can be implemented in the near term to meet specific

needs within Hunt County.

See Appendix B-4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix B-5, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed.

See Appendix B-6, Transportation Poll, for more information about the transportation poll.

JOHNSON COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to improve public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. These populations can have difficulty finding public transportation options that connect them to doctor's appointments, work opportunities and education or job training. This plan identifies where these transportation connections do not exist or could be improved within Johnson County. This chapter will give an overview of the planning process, research conducted and collected, the public outreach meeting, the transportation poll used to collect personal input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Johnson County.

PROCESS

This plan is required by federal guidance to be updated every four years. The plan must be developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors; individuals with disabilities; representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation; human services providers and other members of the public. The plan is updated to address current public transportation needs of the residents of Johnson County. Through the process and methods described, prioritized strategies were developed so that future public transportation projects can be implemented when federal and state funding becomes available. Two different types of research were conducted during this plan update: data-based and people-based.

Data-based research included obtaining, reviewing,

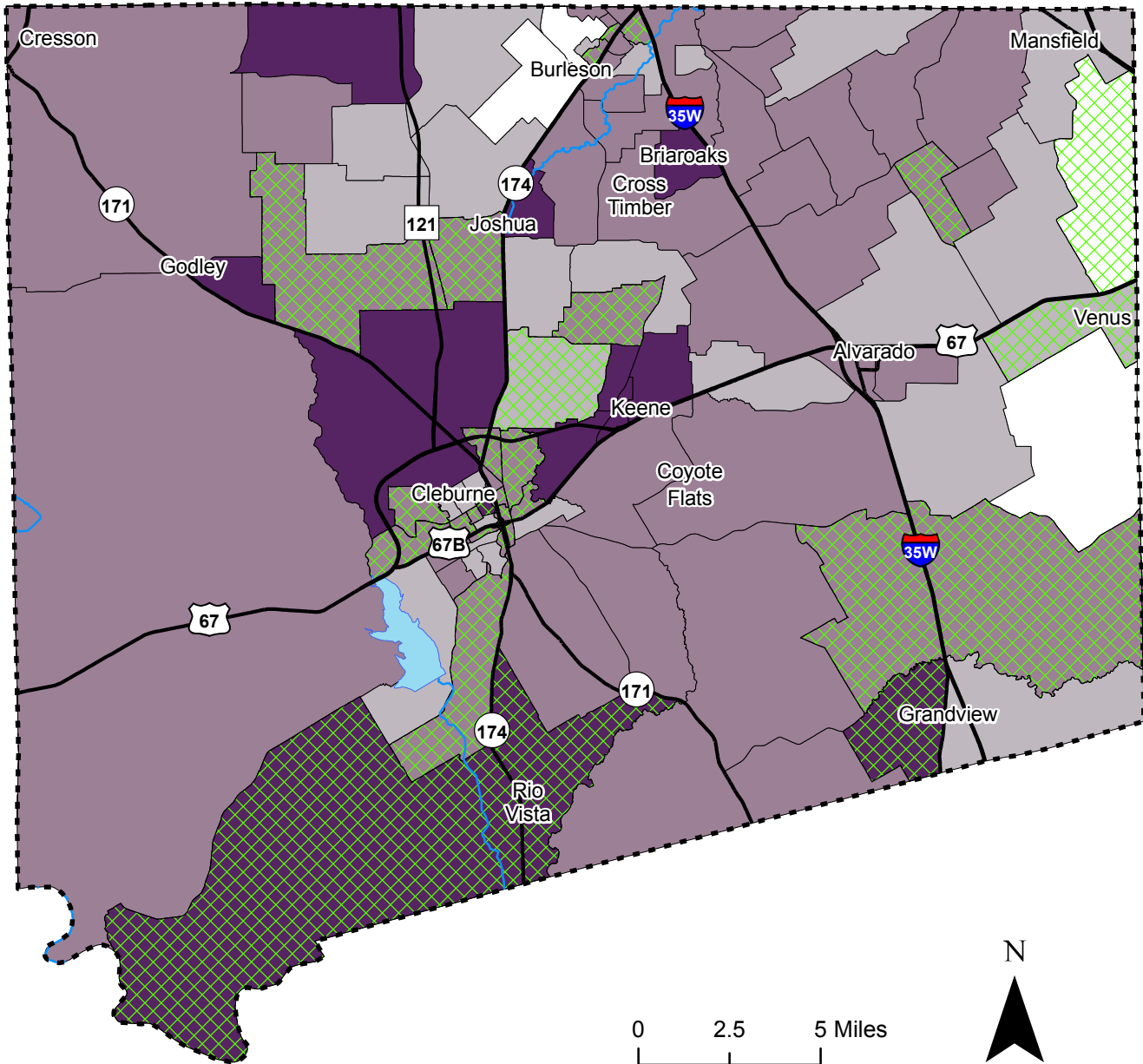
and analyzing Census data; using Census data to develop a mapping tool to identify locations where transit-dependent individuals may live; and identifying existing public transportation providers. The people-based research included reaching out to communities, organizations, and individuals to obtain feedback about the existing public transportation system and how it could be improved. Feedback was obtained through a public outreach meeting and a transportation poll. Through an interactive process, stakeholders prioritized concerns about transit access.

RESEARCH

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

The TAIT was developed to identify locations with certain demographic factors that may indicate a greater need for public transportation. The populations of individuals over age 65, residents below the poverty line, and persons with disabilities were each compared to the regional percentage of the population in that demographic. A map was created based on areas that were above the regional percentage in zero, one, two, or all three of the demographic categories. The more categories that an area is deemed above the regional percentage, the more likely it is that area is to need transit. Zero car households was provided as a supplemental layer to identify households above the regional percentage that do not having a working vehicle available. The tool is useful in identifying groups of people who could benefit from transit services, but is not intended to be the deciding factor in decisions regarding public transportation.

Johnson County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

- All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
- One Variable Above Regional Percentage
- Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
- All Variables Above Regional Percentage
- Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



In Johnson County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentages. The areas above the regional percentage in all three variables are mostly in the central and southern part of the county, including along the SH 174 corridor in Rio Vista, Cleburne, and Joshua, along I35W in Grandview, north of US 67 near Keene, east of SH 171 near Godley, west of I35W in Briaroaks, and in rural Johnson county along the Chisholm Trail Parkway. The census block west of Rio Vista and south of US 67, and two census block groups southwest of Mansfield are above the regional percentage in persons below the poverty line and persons with disabilities. The remainder of county census block groups with two variables above the regional percentage are persons age 65 and over and persons with disabilities. Generally, areas with a single variable above the regional percentage in the eastern and northern parts of the county are persons with disabilities. The areas with a single variable above the regional percentage in the central part of the county are primarily persons age 65 and over, with some block groups in Cleburne having a higher than regional percentage of persons below the poverty line. Zero car households above the regional percentage are mostly located along SH 174 in the central and southern parts of Johnson County. In eastern Johnson County, zero car households above the regional percentage are found along I35W and US 67. The highest proportion of persons living below the poverty line is found within Cleburne. Additionally, the highest proportions of persons with disabilities live within Cleburne and between Godley and Joshua.

Additional Demographic and Commuter Information

Johnson County continues to experience a steady amount of growth. According to the American Community Survey's 2015 5-year estimates, since the 2010 Census, Johnson County's population has increased by 3.0%. In comparison, the 16-county region has grown 6.3% in that same time period. Public trans-

portation needs will change as the population grows. Within Johnson County, 5.4% of residents speak English less than very well. Efforts to promote existing or new transit services should include strategies to reach this population.

According to U.S. Census employer information as of 2014, Johnson County is home to around 41,000 jobs, with approximately 17,000 of those workers living within the county. Nearly 24,000 workers commute into the county, while 48,000 commute out of the county to access their jobs. About 38% of Johnson County workers live within 10 miles of their jobs, and the majority of commuters into the county enter from the north and northwest. The economy in Johnson County is fairly diverse, with educational and manufacturing jobs each providing around 14% of the jobs in the county. The county's employees are fairly well educated too, with 40% of workers having some college experience or a degree.

Transportation Resources

The main public transportation provider is City/County Transportation, which provides a commuter bus route to downtown Fort Worth and public transportation within Johnson County, Monday through Friday. Transportation is available to the general public as well as older adults and individuals with disabilities. Saturday service is available for the city of Cleburne. The commuter route has stops in Cleburne, Joshua, Burleson, the Fort Worth Veterans Clinic, and the Intermodal Transportation Center in downtown Fort Worth. Another commuter option, provided by the Fort Worth Transportation Authority (FWTA), is vanpools. Johnson County is the origin for 16 vanpools operated by FWTA.

See Appendix B4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

OUTREACH MEETING

The public meeting for Johnson County was held on October 24, 2016 at the Cleburne Conference Center in Cleburne. 114 invitations were mailed and emailed to interested parties throughout the county. Meeting announcements and information were also posted online, and invitees were encouraged to share the invitation with partner organizations and clients to help promote the meetings. A total of 24 people attended the meeting.

Following a general welcome and presentation about public transit within the county, staff led an interactive keypad polling session to instigate discussion of transportation issues with attendees. Based on discussion question answers, community members prioritized current issues in the county and re-prioritized strategies from the 2013 Access North Texas Plan.

Comments and discussion in the public outreach meeting identified that the main public transportation concern is expanding current services. Additional capacity is needed to provide transportation to job opportunities (within Johnson County and into Tarrant County), particularly for alternative shifts; medical appointments in Tarrant County; educational opportunities in Johnson County; and a connection to Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport via downtown Fort Worth. Local governments have not considered public transportation a priority for local funds. Additionally, subsidized fares for low-income individuals would help improve their ability to access public transit.

TRANSPORTATION POLL

A transportation poll was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper, and available in English and Spanish. The poll collected first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations. Individual poll data revealed personal experiences with transportation. Polls completed by organizations on behalf of their clients explained issues seen by advocates of the people served by each

organization. Both forms of the poll provide personal views of the public transportation system.

Johnson County residents submitted eleven responses to the transportation poll. The average age of the respondents is 48, with the youngest 30 and oldest 72. All eleven respondents said they drive themselves and four responded they get a ride with a friend or family member for their transportation needs. Two respondents cited that they have missed trips in the past six months, with both responding they missed medical appointments. One respondent said they missed trips due to not having a car or someone to drive available, and that available public transportation does not meet their needs. Two respondents would be interested in seeing local bus service and commuter bus service, with one respondent interested in a community wide dial-a-ride system.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders thought should be implemented over the next few years. These strategies build upon the progress that has taken place since the 2013 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Johnson County Prioritized Strategies

Johnson Strategy 1 Expand hours of operation in the evenings to accommodate alternate or third shifts, including coordination with employers

Johnson Strategy 2 Explore partnerships with local employers, medical centers, cities, and other agencies to fund additional transit services

Johnson Strategy 3 Develop additional action plans to increase transit services as well as review governance of City/County Transportation

Johnson Strategy 4 Create and maintain a coordinating committee to discuss ongoing transportation needs

Johnson Strategy 5 Identify a point-person to develop relationships with local agencies to improve

coordination and access to services, jobs and education within Johnson County, as well as regional connections

Johnson Strategy 6 Work with an existing transit provider to improve the connection between Johnson County and Fort Worth for medical appointments and work

Johnson Strategy 7 Work with an existing transit provider to improve the connection between Johnson County, downtown Fort Worth, and the airport

Johnson Strategy 8 Develop partnerships with non-profits, employers, and other partners to make fares more affordable for very low-income individuals

Johnson Strategy 9 Educate local officials on available transit services, local demand, opportunities to leverage funding, and opportunities for economic development with transit

Johnson Strategy 10 Work with 2-1-1 at least biannually to ensure transportation resources are up-to-date

Johnson Strategy 11 Conduct targeted marketing to local agencies about existing transportation resources

Regional Strategies for Coordinated Public Transportation

Much like the county strategies, the regional strategies may also be applicable to Johnson County.

Regional Strategy 1 In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit

Regional Strategy 2 Continue and expand projects that have a no-wrong-door approach to accessing transit or information about available transit

Regional Strategy 3 Create partnerships to simplify regional trips and reduce the number of transfers between providers

Regional Strategy 4 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Regional Strategy 5 Work towards uniform, regional fares to simplify and reduce the cost of regional trips for riders

Regional Strategy 6 Advocate to integrate funding

sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Regional Strategy 7 Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate non-traditional ways to deliver public transportation service, including partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, and transportation network companies

Regional Strategy 8 Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transit through leadership or policy initiatives and to advocate for increasing investment in public transit

Implementing the Plan

Transportation providers and local stakeholders will collaborate to determine next steps, form needed partnerships, identify and pursue funding, and ultimately implement selected strategies. Organizations that want to implement a strategy listed in this plan will need to develop strong partnerships with transportation providers, stakeholder agencies, communities, and counties. NCTCOG staff is available to help organizations identify potential partners and coordination opportunities. Organizations should also identify potential funding sources, which can be a mix of private and public funds, including funds from local, state, and federal sources. Local funds from public and private sources are important to demonstrate a community or organizational commitment to implementing specific strategies. Local funds are especially important to leverage state and federal dollars. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and NCTCOG have regular calls for projects to award federal funds that support projects and strategies listed in this plan.

Characteristics of a highly competitive project:

- Is multi-year. A three year request is recommended for projects providing transit service;
- Identifies an existing public transit provider or existing non-profit transportation provider when proposing to provide transit service;

- Targets individuals with lower incomes for requests of Urbanized Area Formula Program (Job Access/Reverse Commute projects) funds;
- Targets older adults and individuals with disabilities for requests of Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds; and
- Supports one or more strategies outlined in this plan.

If a project is funded through NCTCOG or Tx-DOT, staff will document the project funding in the Transportation Improvement Program, coordinate necessary approvals, develop contract agreements, and work with implementing agencies to manage the project and all compliance activities associated with federal or state funding.

APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Johnson County, please see Appendix C-Johnson, available online at www.accessnorthtexas.org. The Public Transportation Toolbox (see Appendix B-3) highlights transit services that can be implemented in the near term to meet specific needs within Johnson County.

See Appendix B-4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix B-5, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed.

See Appendix B-6, Transportation Poll, for more information about the transportation poll.

KAUFMAN COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to improve public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. These populations can have difficulty finding public transportation options that connect them to doctor's appointments, work opportunities and education or job training. This plan identifies where these transportation connections do not exist or could be improved within Kaufman County. This chapter will give an overview of the planning process, research conducted and collected, the public outreach meeting, the transportation poll used to collect personal input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Kaufman County.

PROCESS

This plan is required by federal guidance to be updated every four years. The plan must be developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors; individuals with disabilities; representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation; human services providers and other members of the public. The plan is updated to address current public transportation needs of the residents of Kaufman County. Through the process and methods described, prioritized strategies were developed so that future public transportation projects can be implemented when federal and State funding becomes available. Two different types of research were conducted during this plan update: data-based and people-based.

Data-based research included obtaining, reviewing, and analyzing Census data; using Census data to

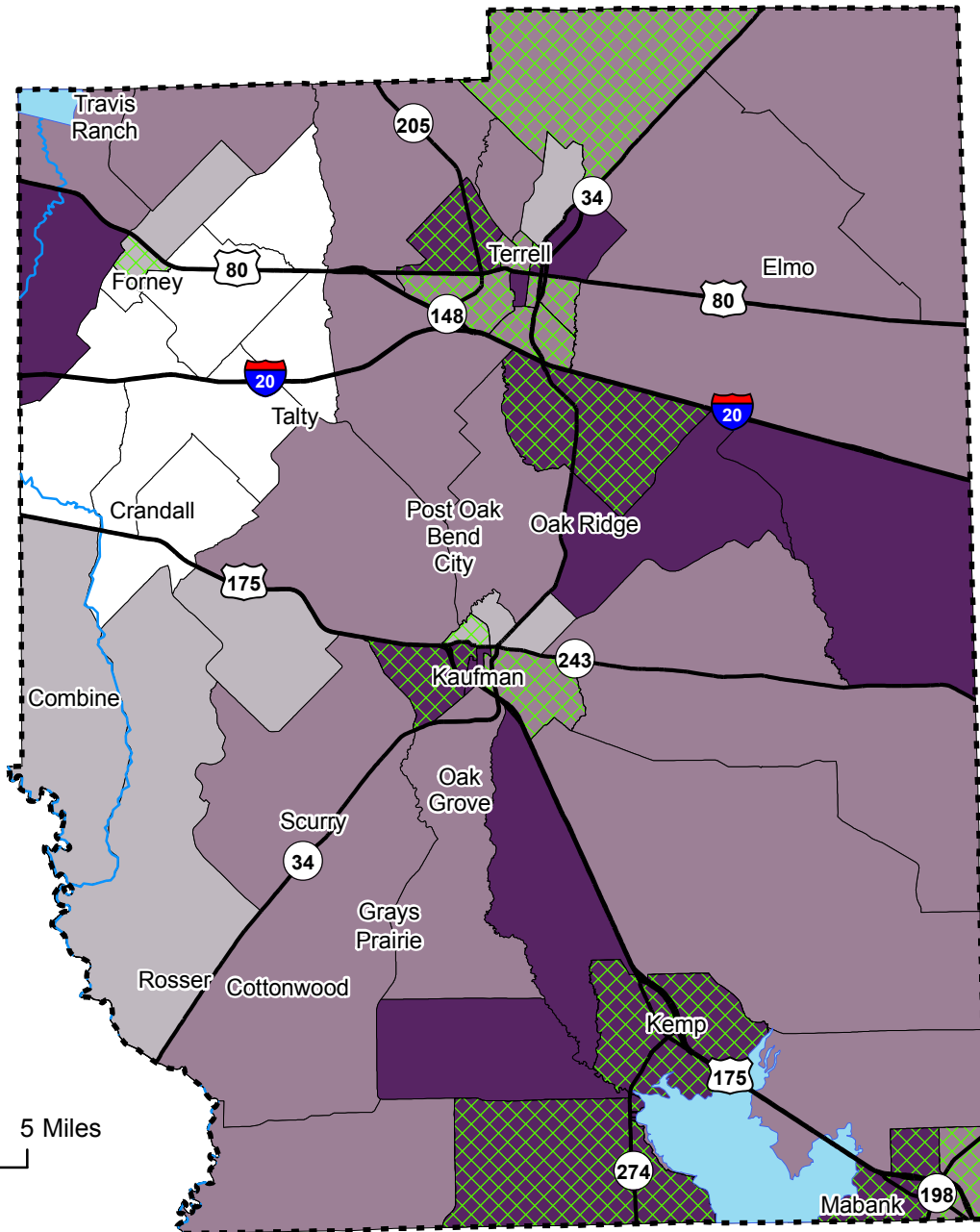
develop a mapping tool to identify locations where transit-dependent individuals may live; and identifying existing public transportation providers. The people-based research included reaching out to communities, organizations, and individuals to obtain feedback about the existing public transportation system and how it could be improved. Feedback was obtained through a public outreach meeting and a transportation poll. Through an interactive process, stakeholders prioritized concerns about transit access.

RESEARCH

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

The TAIT was developed to identify locations with certain demographic factors that may indicate a greater need for public transportation. The populations of individuals over age 65, residents below the poverty line, and persons with disabilities were each compared to the regional percentage of the population in that demographic. A map was created based on areas that were above the regional percentage in zero, one, two, or all three of the demographic categories. The more categories that an area is deemed above the regional percentage, the more likely it is that area is to need transit. Zero car households was provided as a supplemental layer to identify households above the regional percentage that do not having a working vehicle available. The tool is useful in identifying groups of people who could benefit from transit services, but is not intended to be the deciding factor in decisions regarding public transportation.

Kaufman County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

- All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
- One Variable Above Regional Percentage
- Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
- All Variables Above Regional Percentage
- Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

In Kaufman County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentages. These areas are predominantly in the central and southern parts of the county, including Kemp, Mabank, south of I20 near Oak Ridge, along the US 80 corridor in Terrell and west of Forney, and the rural area west of US 175 in southern Kaufman County. The remaining majority of the county has two of the three variables above the regional percentage. Scurry and Post Oak Bend City block groups are above the regional percentage in residents below the poverty line and persons with disabilities, while the remainder of areas with two variables above the regional percentage were in persons age 65 and over and persons with disabilities. The areas around Combine south of US 175 and west of SH 34, as well as north of US 80 near Forney have one variable over the regional percentage, with the one variable being a higher than regional percentage population age 65 and over. Only western Kaufman County near Crandall, Talty, and Forney shows zero variables above the regional percentage. Zero car households in Kaufman County are located along the SH 34 corridor in Terrell, Oak Ridge, the city of Kaufman, and along US 175 in Kemp and Mabank. The rural area along SH 274 in southern Kaufman County is also above the regional percentage in zero car households. Kaufman County has a large proportion of persons with disabilities living in the northeast corner of the county as well as east of Oak Grove.

Additional Demographic and Commuter Information

Kaufman County continues to experience a steady amount of growth. According to the American Community Survey's 2015 5-year estimates, since the 2010 Census, Kaufman County's population has increased by 5.7%. In comparison, the 16-county region has grown 6.3% in that same time period. Public transportation needs will change as the population grows. Within Kaufman County, 6.8% of residents speak English less than very well. Efforts to promote existing

or new transit services should include strategies to reach this population.

According to U.S. Census employer information as of 2014, Kaufman County is home to nearly 25,000 jobs, and 9,000 residents of the county also work within the county. Around 16,000 workers commute into the county for employment, while approximately 39,000 people commute out of the county to access their job. Around 3 in 10 workers live within 10 miles of their jobs in Kaufman County, with the majority of incoming commuters from the west and northwest. The economy in Kaufman County is fairly diverse, with both the manufacturing and retail trade industries each providing around 14.5% of the jobs in the county. Workers in the county are also fairly well educated, with 40% having either some college experience or a degree.

Transportation Resources

STAR Transit is the main transportation provider in Kaufman County. They provide demand response service to the general public, including older adults and individuals with disabilities. STAR Transit's Kaufman Trolley operates in the city of Kaufman Monday through Friday. Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) also operates 16 vanpools that originate in Kaufman County.

See Appendix B4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

OUTREACH MEETING

The public meeting for Kaufman County was held on March 13, 2017 at STAR Transit in Terrell. 93 invitations were mailed and emailed to interested parties throughout the county. Meeting announcements and information were also posted online, and invitees were encouraged to share the invitation with partner organizations and clients to help promote the meetings. A

total of 24 people attended the meeting.

Following a general welcome and presentation about public transit within the county, staff led an interactive keypad polling session to instigate discussion of transportation issues with attendees. Based on discussion question answers, community members prioritized current issues in the county and re-prioritized strategies from the 2013 Access North Texas Plan.

Attendees at the outreach meeting made it clear that additional capacity to the existing rural public transit system was needed to help residents access job training and opportunities (particularly for early morning shifts) within the county. A better connection between cities such as Terrell and Kaufman was also identified as a need. Individuals also noted that increased awareness of available public transit could help increase the opportunity to expand service.

TRANSPORTATION POLL

A transportation poll was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper, and available in English and Spanish. The poll collected first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations. Individual poll data revealed personal experiences with transportation. Polls completed by organizations on behalf of their clients explained issues seen by advocates of the people served by each organization. Both forms of the poll provide personal views of the public transportation system.

Kaufman County residents submitted fifteen responses to the transportation poll. The average age of respondents was 59, with the youngest 26 and oldest 92. Of the fifteen respondents, twelve said they get a ride with a friend or family member, seven responded they drive themselves, and six use public transportation for their transportation needs. Five of the respondents cite they have missed trips in the last six months, with three responding they have missed shopping trips, social or entertainment events, and religious activities. The most common reasons for missing trips

were that no public transportation service was available or the available transit did not meet their needs. Four respondents cited interest in a community wide dial-a-ride service, while three respondents said they would be interested in commuter bus service.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders thought should be implemented over the next few years. These strategies build upon the progress that has taken place since the 2013 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Kaufman County Prioritized Strategies

Kaufman Strategy 1 Increase access to job training and job opportunities, particularly for:

1. Rural residents
2. Early morning shifts

Kaufman Strategy 2 Add capacity to the existing system by:

1. Continuing to develop partnerships with local employers, medical centers, cities, and other agencies to increase available public transit, particularly in the mornings or other high-demand times
2. Planning for additional services by identifying need, funding, and potential service structure in areas with high demand (e.g. circulator in Terrell)
3. Exploring opportunities to partner with other transit providers to add additional capacity

Kaufman Strategy 3 Increase public awareness of available transportation services by conducting targeted marketing to places such as:

1. Texas Workforce Commission
2. Lakes Regional MHMR
3. Health and Human Services
4. Housing Authorities
5. Food banks

6. Cities
7. Churches
8. Schools
9. Chambers of Commerce
10. Grocery stores
11. Direct mail

Kaufman Strategy 4 Advocate for agencies to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Kaufman Strategy 5 Conduct travel training or train-the-trainer that covers topics such as:

1. Available services
2. How to schedule a trip
3. Rider rules by type of service
4. What to do if a trip or pick-up is missed
5. How to request specific pick-up/drop-off locations for safety

Kaufman Strategy 6 Continue to conduct driver safety and sensitivity training to improve the rider's experience

Kaufman Strategy 7 Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure public transportation resources are up-to-date

Regional Strategies for Coordinated Public Transportation

Much like the county strategies, the regional strategies may also be applicable to Kaufman County.

Regional Strategy 1 In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit

Regional Strategy 2 Continue and expand projects that have a no-wrong-door approach to accessing transit or information about available transit

Regional Strategy 3 Create partnerships to simplify regional trips and reduce the number of transfers between providers

Regional Strategy 4 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Regional Strategy 5 Work towards uniform, regional fares to simplify and reduce the cost of regional trips for riders

Regional Strategy 6 Advocate to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Regional Strategy 7 Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate non-traditional ways to deliver public transportation service, including partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, and transportation network companies

Regional Strategy 8 Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transit through leadership or policy initiatives and to advocate for increasing investment in public transit

Implementing the Plan

Transportation providers and local stakeholders will collaborate to determine next steps, form needed partnerships, identify and pursue funding, and ultimately implement selected strategies. Organizations that want to implement a strategy listed in this plan will need to develop strong partnerships with transportation providers, stakeholder agencies, communities, and counties. NCTCOG staff is available to help organizations identify potential partners and coordination opportunities. Organizations should also identify potential funding sources, which can be a mix of private and public funds, including funds from local, state, and federal sources. Local funds from public and private sources are important to demonstrate a community or organizational commitment to implementing specific strategies. Local funds are especially important to leverage state and federal dollars. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and NCTCOG have regular calls for projects to award federal funds that support projects and strategies listed in this plan.

Characteristics of a highly competitive project:

- Is multi-year. A three year request is recommended for projects providing transit service;
- Identifies an existing public transit provider or existing non-profit transportation provider when proposing to provide transit service;
- Targets individuals with lower incomes for requests of Urbanized Area Formula Program (Job Access/Reverse Commute projects) funds;
- Targets older adults and individuals with disabilities for requests of Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds; and
- Supports one or more strategies outlined in this plan.

If a project is funded through NCTCOG or Tx-DOT, staff will document the project funding in the Transportation Improvement Program, coordinate necessary approvals, develop contract agreements, and work with implementing agencies to manage the project and all compliance activities associated with federal or state funding.

APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Kaufman County, please see Appendix C-Kaufman, available online at www.accessnorthtexas.org. The Public Transportation Toolbox (see Appendix B-3) highlights transit services that can be implemented in the near term to meet specific needs within Kaufman County.

See Appendix B-4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix B-5, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed.

See Appendix B-6, Transportation Poll, for more information about the transportation poll.

NAVARRO COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to improve public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. These populations can have difficulty finding public transportation options that connect them to doctor's appointments, work opportunities and education or job training. This plan identifies where these transportation connections do not exist or could be improved within Navarro County. This chapter will give an overview of the planning process, research conducted and collected, the public outreach meeting, the transportation poll used to collect personal input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Navarro County.

PROCESS

This plan is required by federal guidance to be updated every four years. The plan must be developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors; individuals with disabilities; representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation; human services providers and other members of the public. The plan is updated to address current public transportation needs of the residents of Navarro County. Through the process and methods described, prioritized strategies were developed so that future public transportation projects can be implemented when federal and state funding becomes available. Two different types of research were conducted during this plan update: data-based and people-based.

Data-based research included obtaining, reviewing, and analyzing Census data; using Census data to

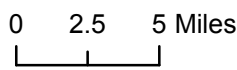
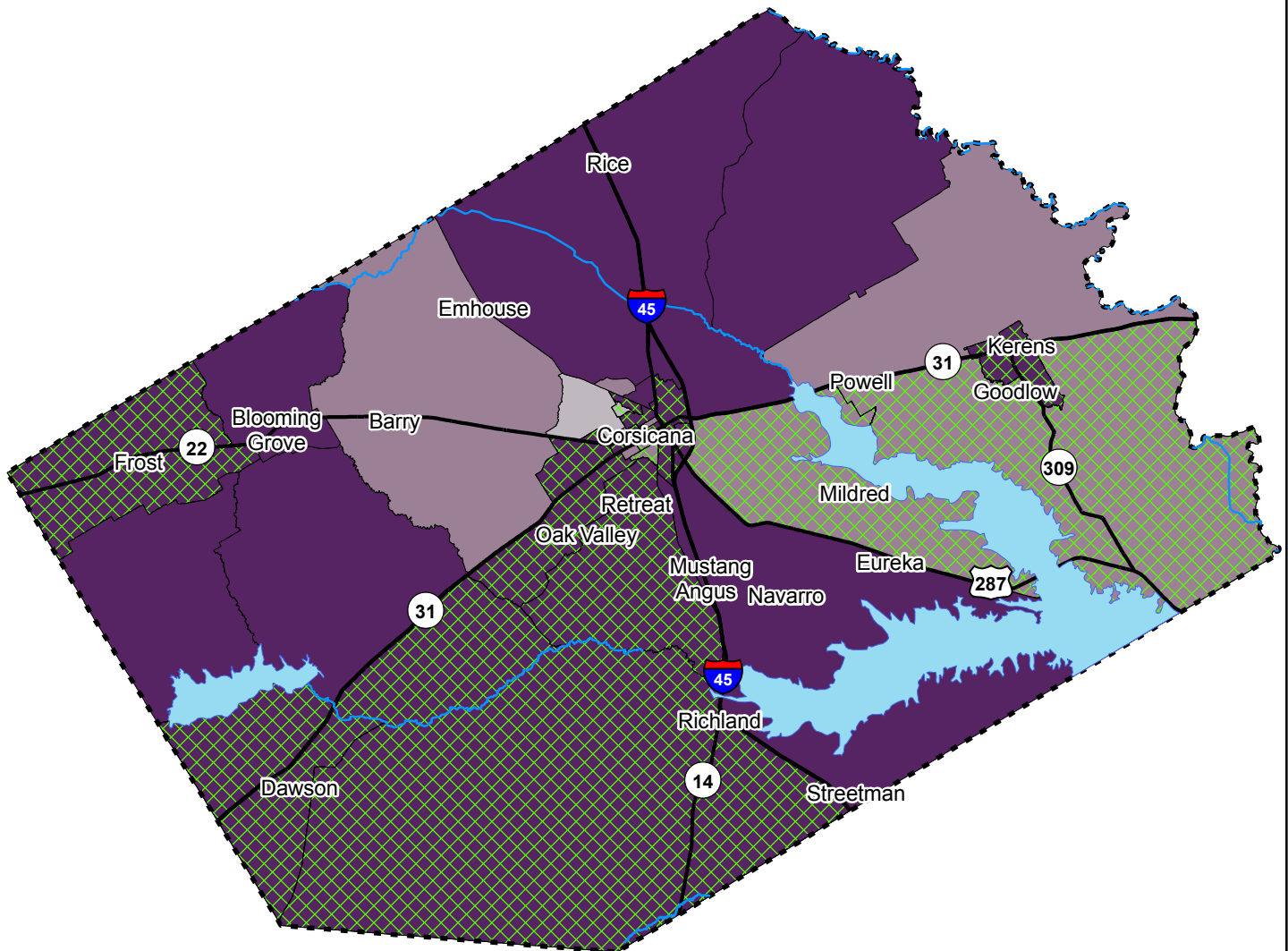
develop a mapping tool to identify locations where transit-dependent individuals may live; and identifying existing public transportation providers. The people-based research included reaching out to communities, organizations, and individuals to obtain feedback about the existing public transportation system and how it could be improved. Feedback was obtained through a public outreach meeting and a transportation poll. Through an interactive process, stakeholders prioritized concerns about transit access.

RESEARCH






The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

The TAIT was developed to identify locations with certain demographic factors that may indicate a greater need for public transportation. The populations of individuals over age 65, residents below the poverty line, and persons with disabilities were each compared to the regional percentage of the population in that demographic. A map was created based on areas that were above the regional percentage in zero, one, two, or all three of the demographic categories. The more categories that an area is deemed above the regional percentage, the more likely it is that area is to need transit. Zero car households was provided as a supplemental layer to identify households above the regional percentage that do not having a working vehicle available. The tool is useful in identifying groups of people who could benefit from transit services, but is not intended to be the deciding factor in decisions regarding public transportation.

Navarro County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

-  All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
-  One Variable Above Regional Percentage
-  Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  All Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



In Navarro County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentage. These areas above the regional percentage cover the majority of the county, especially along the I45, SH 22, SH 31 west of I45, and SH14 corridors. Eastern and northwestern Navarro County along SH 31 and SH 309 are home to the census block groups with only two variables above the regional percentage, with all of those block groups containing a higher percentage of persons age 65 and over and persons with disabilities. The block groups in Corsicana with two variables above the regional percentage are predominately persons below the poverty line and persons with disabilities. The western part of Corsicana, north of SH 22, has the only block groups where only one variable is above the regional percentage, which is persons with disabilities. There are no areas in Navarro County where all three variables are at or below the regional percentage. The northern part of the county is the primary area where zero car households are not above the regional percentage. Southern and eastern Navarro County is dominated by areas with higher than regional percentages for zero car households. A high concentration of persons living below the poverty line lives within Corsicana. All of Navarro County has a higher proportion of persons living with a disability.

Additional Demographic and Commuter Information

Navarro County continues to experience some growth. According to the American Community Survey's 2015 5-year estimates, since the 2010 Census, Navarro County's population has increased by 0.8%. In comparison, the 16-county region has grown 6.3% in that same time period. Additionally, within Navarro County, 11.1% of residents speak English less than very well and information about available transit services may be difficult for these individuals to access if it is provided only in English.

According to U.S. Census employer information as

of 2014, Navarro County is home to around 14,500 jobs, with around half of those workers also living within the county. Nearly 7,500 people commute into the county for employment, while around 12,000 people commute out of the county for work. Around 38% of Navarro County employees live within 10 miles of their jobs, while the majority of commuters into the county from the north and northwest. The economy is somewhat diverse in Navarro County, with manufacturing, educational, health care and social assistance, and retail trade industries providing around 54% of the jobs. Employees in the county are fairly well educated, with around 40% of workers either having some college experience or a degree.

Transportation Resources

Community Transit Services (CTS) is the primary general public transportation provider and serves Navarro County.

See Appendix B4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

OUTREACH MEETING

A joint public meeting for Ellis County and Navarro County took place at Navarro College in Waxahachie on November 9, 2016. 174 invitations were mailed and emailed to interested parties throughout the county. Meeting announcements and information were also posted online, and invitees were encouraged to share the invitation with partner organizations and clients to help promote the meetings. A total of 24 people attended the meeting.

Following a general welcome and presentation about public transit within the county, staff led an interactive keypad polling session to instigate discussion of transportation issues with attendees. Based on discussion question answers, community members prioritized current issues in the county and re-prioritized strate-

gies from the 2013 Access North Texas Plan.

Comments and discussion during the outreach meeting identified that Navarro County residents needed reliable transportation to medical appointments both locally and in Dallas County. In particular, the cost of trips, locally or regionally, can be cost prohibitive for riders with low incomes. Attendees noted that information about how to make regional trips to Dallas-Fort Worth, which require transferring to another provider, would also improve riders' experience and confidence in the transit system. Currently, riders are concerned about booking return trips based on limited operating hours.

TRANSPORTATION POLL

A transportation poll was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper, and available in English and Spanish. The poll collected first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations. Individual poll data revealed personal experiences with transportation. Polls completed by organizations on behalf of their clients explained issues seen by advocates of the people served by each organization. Both forms of the poll provide personal views of the public transportation system. Respondents totaled 12 from Navarro County.

83% of individuals indicated that they get a ride with a friend or family member while 42% of respondents said they use a bus or van of a community organization or other agency. 50% indicated they use existing public transit. The transportation services that sounded most appealing to poll takers were local bus service, community-wide dial-a-ride service, commuter bus service, and bus routes between communities. Poll responders identified that the available level of transportation isn't meeting the need and additional capacity is needed. Improved connections are needed to Dallas County as well as clinics in Waco and Tyler.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The strategies below identify ways to address the

most important public transportation needs stakeholders thought should be implemented over the next few years. These strategies build upon the progress that has taken place since the 2013 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Navarro County Prioritized Strategies

Navarro Strategy 1 Improve local and regional access to medical appointments in Dallas County

Navarro Strategy 2 Improve transportation options for local access to job and education opportunities

Navarro Strategy 3 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Navarro Strategy 4 Expand transportation services to provide service for late-shift workers in Dallas County

Navarro Strategy 5 Explore partnerships with local employers, medical centers, cities, and other agencies to fund additional transit services

Navarro Strategy 6 Conduct targeted marketing to local agencies about existing transportation resources, including transit resources for veterans

Navarro Strategy 7 Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure public transportation resources are up-to-date

Navarro Strategy 8 Create and maintain a coordinating committee to discuss ongoing transportation needs

Navarro Strategy 9 Establish consistent and effective driver recruitment and retention programs for public transportation services to address difficulties in retaining drivers for vehicles in Navarro County

Navarro Strategy 10 Explore partnerships with existing transportation providers to reduce the number of transfers for regional trips

Regional Strategies for Coordinated Public Transportation

Much like the county strategies, the regional strategies may also be applicable to Navarro County.

Regional Strategy 1 In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit

Regional Strategy 2 Continue and expand projects that have a no-wrong-door approach to accessing transit or information about available transit

Regional Strategy 3 Create partnerships to simplify regional trips and reduce the number of transfers between providers

Regional Strategy 4 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Regional Strategy 5 Work towards uniform, regional fares to simplify and reduce the cost of regional trips for riders

Regional Strategy 6 Advocate to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Regional Strategy 7 Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate non-traditional ways to deliver public transportation service, including partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, and transportation network companies

Regional Strategy 8 Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transit through leadership or policy initiatives and to advocate for increasing investment in public transit

Implementing the Plan

Transportation providers and local stakeholders will collaborate to determine next steps, form needed partnerships, identify and pursue funding, and ultimately implement selected strategies. Organizations that want to implement a strategy listed in this plan will need to develop strong partnerships with transportation providers, stakeholder agencies, communities, and counties. NCTCOG staff is available to help organizations identify potential partners and coordination opportunities. Organizations should also identify potential funding sources, which can be a mix of private and public funds, including funds from local,

state, and federal sources. Local funds from public and private sources are important to demonstrate a community or organizational commitment to implementing specific strategies. Local funds are especially important to leverage state and federal dollars. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and NCTCOG have regular calls for projects to award federal funds that support projects and strategies listed in this plan.

Characteristics of a highly competitive project:

- Is multi-year. A three year request is recommended for projects providing transit service;
- Identifies an existing public transit provider or existing non-profit transportation provider when proposing to provide transit service;
- Targets individuals with lower incomes for requests of Urbanized Area Formula Program (Job Access/Reverse Commute projects) funds;
- Targets older adults and individuals with disabilities for requests of Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds; and
- Supports one or more strategies outlined in this plan.

If a project is funded through NCTCOG or TxDOT, staff will document the project funding in the Transportation Improvement Program, coordinate necessary approvals, develop contract agreements, and work with implementing agencies to manage the project and all compliance activities associated with federal or state funding.

APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Navarro County, please see Appendix C-Navarro, available online at www.accessnorthtexas.org. The Public Transportation Toolbox (see Appendix B-3) highlights transit services that can be implemented in the near term to meet specific needs within Navarro County.

See Appendix B-4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix B-5, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed.

See Appendix B-6, Transportation Poll, for more information about the transportation poll.

PALO PINTO & PARKER COUNTIES

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to improve public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. These populations can have difficulty finding public transportation options that connect them to doctor's appointments, work opportunities and education or job training. This plan identifies where these transportation connections do not exist or could be improved. This chapter will give an overview of the planning process, the research conducted and collected, the public outreach meeting, the transportation poll used to collect personal input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Palo Pinto County and Parker County.

PROCESS

This plan is required by federal guidance to be updated every four years. The plan must be developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors; individuals with disabilities; representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation; human services providers and other members of the public. The plan is updated to address current public transportation needs of the residents of Palo Pinto County and Parker County. Through the process and methods described, prioritized strategies were developed so that future public transportation projects can be implemented when federal and state funding becomes available. Two different types of research were conducted during this plan update: data-based and people-based.

Data-based research included obtaining, reviewing,

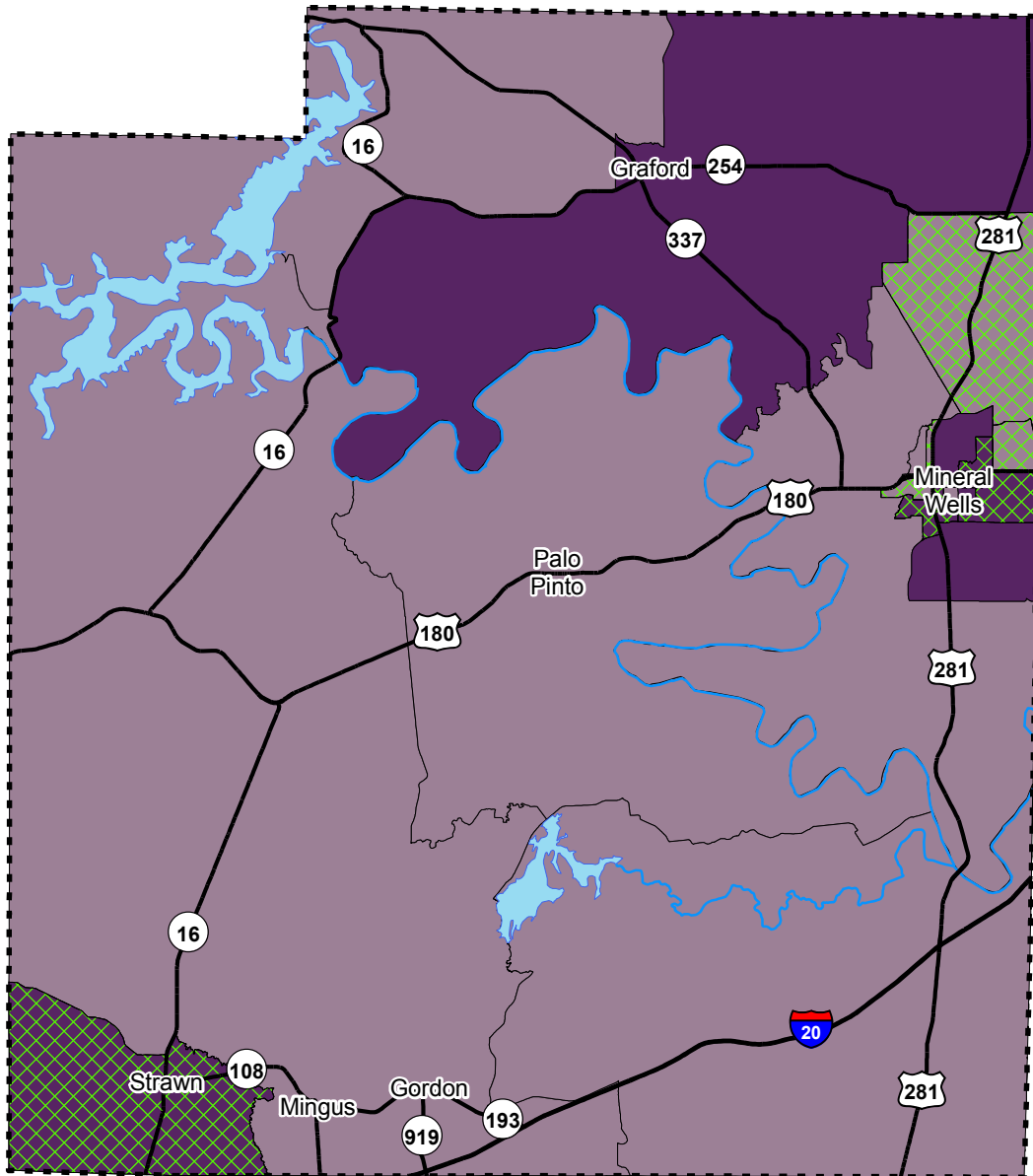
and analyzing Census data; using Census data to develop a mapping tool to identify locations where transit-dependent individuals may live; and identifying existing public transportation providers. The people-based research included reaching out to communities, organizations, and individuals to obtain feedback about the existing public transportation system and how it could be improved. Feedback was obtained through a public outreach meeting and a transportation poll. Through an interactive process, stakeholders prioritized concerns about transit access.

RESEARCH

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

The TAIT was developed to identify locations with certain demographic factors that may indicate a greater need for public transportation. The populations of individuals over age 65, residents below the poverty line, and persons with disabilities were each compared to the regional percentage of the population in that demographic. A map was created based on areas that were above the regional percentage in zero, one, two, or all three of the demographic categories. The more categories that an area is deemed above the regional percentage, the more likely it is that area is to need transit. Zero car households was provided as a supplemental layer to identify households above the regional percentage that do not have a working vehicle available. The tool is useful in identifying groups of people who could benefit from transit services, but is not intended to be the deciding factor in decisions regarding public transportation.

Palo Pinto County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



0 2.5 5 Miles



Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

- All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
- One Variable Above Regional Percentage
- Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
- All Variables Above Regional Percentage
- Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



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In Palo Pinto County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentages. These areas are along US 180 in Mineral Wells, along SH 16 in Strawn, and along SH 337 and SH 254 in Graford. The remainder of the county's census block groups have two variables above the regional percentage. All but one of the census block groups in Mineral Wells is higher than the regional percentage in persons below the poverty line and persons with disabilities. The remainder of the county is higher than the regional percentage in persons age 65 and over and persons with disabilities. Zero car households above the regional percentage are located near Strawn, along US 180 in Mineral Wells, and along US 281 north of Mineral Wells.

In Parker County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentages. These areas are along the SH 199 corridor near Reno and Springtown, north of Weatherford along SH 51, and the southwest corner of the county. The vast majority of block groups with two variables above the regional percentage contain a higher percentage of persons age 65 and over and persons with disabilities. One census block group east of Weatherford has a higher percentage of persons below the poverty line and persons with disabilities, while the census block group north of Hudson Oaks has a higher percentage of persons age 65 and older and persons below the poverty line. Along I20 near Aledo and Willow Park, north of US 180 in Mineral Wells and western Weatherford, and east of SH 51 in Springtown, the only variable above the regional percentage is persons with disabilities. Hudson Oaks and the rural area east of SH 171 contain only a higher percentage of persons age 65 and over. Annetta has the only block group where all three variables are at or below the regional percentage. Zero car households above the regional percentage are predominately located on the edge of Parker County, including west of Horseshoe Bend, Mineral Wells, the SH 199 corridor

in Springtown, and central Weatherford.

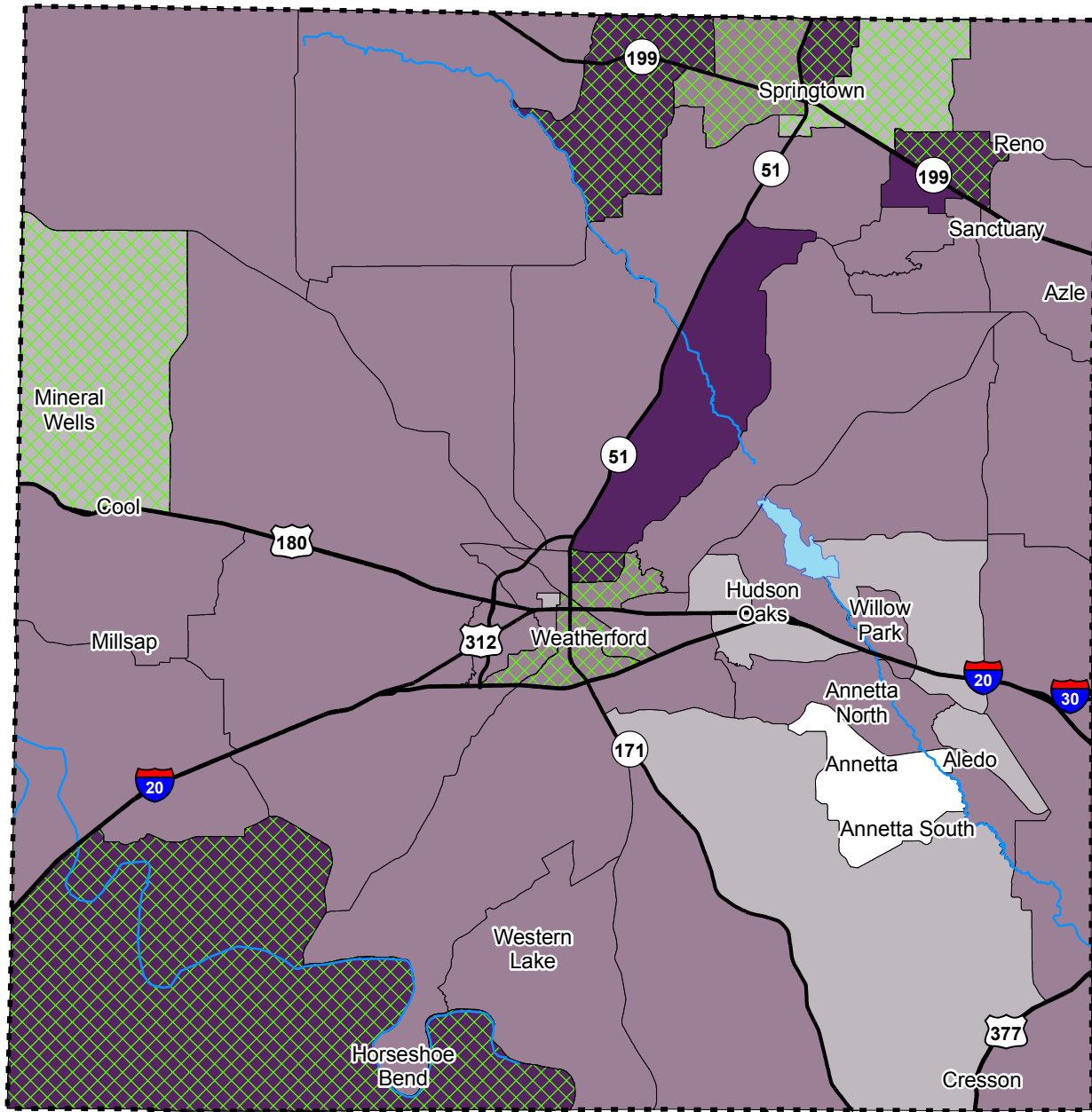
Additional Demographic and Commuter Information

According to the American Community Survey's 2015 5-year estimates, since the 2010 Census, Palo Pinto County's population has decreased by 0.7% while Parker County's population has increased by 3.8%. In comparison, the 16-county region has grown 6.3% in that same time period. Public transportation needs will change as the population changes. Within Palo Pinto County and Parker County, 6.8% and 2.8% of residents, respectively, speak English less than very well. Efforts to promote existing or new transit services should include strategies to reach this population.

According to U.S. Census employer information as of 2014, Palo Pinto County is home to around 7,000 jobs, with about 3,300 employees residing within the county. Around 3,600 workers commute into the county, while nearly 6,000 leave the county for work each day. Around 40% of Palo Pinto County employees work within 10 miles of their home, with the vast majority of commuters into the county entering from the east. The economy is somewhat diverse, with the retail trade industry providing around 17% of the jobs in the county. Workers in the county are fairly well educated, with around 40% having either some college experience or a degree.

According to the same set of data, Parker County is home to approximately 32,000 jobs, with about 13,000 of those employees residing within the county. Almost 19,000 commuters travel into Parker County for work, while around 36,000 commute out of the county to access their jobs. Around one-third of Parker County workers live within ten miles of their jobs. The majority of commuters into the county enter from the east. The economy of Parker County is somewhat diverse, with four industries, including mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction; manufacturing; retail trade; and educational services providing approximately 45% of jobs. The county's workforce is fairly

Parker County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



0 2.5 5 Miles



Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

- All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
- One Variable Above Regional Percentage
- Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
- All Variables Above Regional Percentage
- Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



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well educated, with around 40% of employees having either some college experience or a degree.

Transportation Resources

The main public transportation provider is Public Transit Services (PTS). They serve the general public as well as older adults and individuals with disabilities in Palo Pinto County and Parker County. Services include demand response curb-to-curb service on a call-in basis, deviated routes with generalized schedule, and a weekly dialysis clinic route. PTS provides Medicaid transportation services and medical transportation on a non-emergency basis. The Parker County Committee on Aging also provides some transportation to older adults in Parker County. The Fort Worth Transportation Authority (FWTA) also operates vanpools in Parker County, with 12 vanpools originating in the county.

See Appendix B4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

OUTREACH MEETING

A joint public meeting for Palo Pinto County and Parker County took place at the Weatherford Library in Weatherford on February 21, 2017. 137 invitations were mailed and emailed to interested parties throughout the county. Meeting announcements and information were also posted online, and invitees were encouraged to share the invitation with partner organizations and clients to help promote the meetings. A total of 18 people attended the meeting.

Following a general welcome and presentation about public transit within the county, staff led an interactive keypad polling session to instigate discussion of transportation issues with attendees. Based on discussion question answers, community members prioritized current issues in the county and re-prioritized strategies from the 2013 Access North Texas Plan.

Comments and discussion during the outreach meeting identified that additional capacity is necessary to improve access to mental health appointments, social service appointments, medical appointments, job training, and job opportunities. For existing service, attendees noted that wait times can be lengthy. A lack of coordination was also identified as a problem. Increasing coordination/centralization were mentioned as important in order to increase the efficiency of transit service. While attendees were aware of PTS, the main public transportation provider for Palo Pinto County and Parker County, not everyone understood how to access their transit service.

TRANSPORTATION POLL

A transportation poll was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper, and available in English and Spanish. The poll collected first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations. Individual poll data revealed personal experiences with transportation. Polls completed by organizations on behalf of their clients explained issues seen by advocates of the people served by each organization. Both forms of the poll provide personal views of the public transportation system.

Parker County residents submitted five responses to the transportation poll. The average age of respondents is 59, with the youngest 24 and oldest 73. Four of the five respondents said they drive themselves and three respondents said they get a ride with friends or family members for their transportation needs. None of the respondents missed any trips in their last six months, though three responded they would be interested in local bus service and two cited interest in commuter bus service.

No poll responses were received from Palo Pinto County.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stake-

holders thought should be implemented over the next few years. These strategies build upon the progress that has taken place since the 2013 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Palo Pinto County and Parker County Prioritized Strategies

Strategy 1 Improve access to:

1. Mental health appointments
2. Social service appointments
3. Medical appointments
4. Job training and job opportunities

Strategy 2 Improve the ride and wait times on transit services to increase the feasibility and acceptability of transit for everyday trips

Strategy 3 Create and maintain a coordinating committee to discuss ongoing transportation needs

Strategy 4 Explore partnerships with local employers, medical centers, cities, and other agencies to fund additional transit services

Strategy 5 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Strategy 6 Advocate for agencies to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Strategy 7 Conduct targeted marketing to local agencies about existing transportation resources

Strategy 8 Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure public transportation resources are up-to-date

Regional Strategies for Coordinated Public Transportation

Much like the county strategies, the regional strategies may also be applicable to Palo Pinto County and Parker County.

Regional Strategy 1 In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit

Regional Strategy 2 Continue and expand projects that have a no-wrong-door approach to accessing transit or information about available transit

Regional Strategy 3 Create partnerships to simplify regional trips and reduce the number of transfers between providers

Regional Strategy 4 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Regional Strategy 5 Work towards uniform, regional fares to simplify and reduce the cost of regional trips for riders

Regional Strategy 6 Advocate to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Regional Strategy 7 Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate non-traditional ways to deliver public transportation service, including partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, and transportation network companies

Regional Strategy 8 Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transit through leadership or policy initiatives and to advocate for increasing investment in public transit

Implementing the Plan

Transportation providers and local stakeholders will collaborate to determine next steps, form needed partnerships, identify and pursue funding, and ultimately implement selected strategies. Organizations that want to implement a strategy listed in this plan will need to develop strong partnerships with transportation providers, stakeholder agencies, communities, and counties. NCTCOG staff is available to help organizations identify potential partners and coordination opportunities. Organizations should also identify potential funding sources, which can be a mix of private and public funds, including funds from local, state, and federal sources. Local funds from public and private sources are important to demonstrate a community or organizational commitment to implementing specific strategies. Local funds are especially

important to leverage state and federal dollars. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and NCTCOG have regular calls for projects to award federal funds that support projects and strategies listed in this plan.

Characteristics of a highly competitive project:

- Is multi-year. A three year request is recommended for projects providing transit service;
- Identifies an existing public transit provider or existing non-profit transportation provider when proposing to provide transit service;
- Targets individuals with lower incomes for requests of Urbanized Area Formula Program (Job Access/Reverse Commute projects) funds;
- Targets older adults and individuals with disabilities for requests of Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds; and
- Supports one or more strategies outlined in this plan.

If a project is funded through NCTCOG or TxDOT, staff will document the project funding in the Transportation Improvement Program, coordinate necessary approvals, develop contract agreements, and work with implementing agencies to manage the project and all compliance activities associated with federal or state funding.

APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Palo Pinto County and Parker County, please see Appendix C-Palo Pinto and Parker, available online at www.accessnorthtexas.org. The Public Transportation Toolbox (see Appendix B-3) highlights transit services that can be implemented in the near term to meet specific needs within Palo Pinto County and Parker County.

See Appendix B-4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional

transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix B-5, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed.

See Appendix B-6, Transportation Poll, for more information about the transportation poll.

ROCKWALL COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to improve public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. These populations can have difficulty finding public transportation options that connect them to doctor's appointments, work opportunities and education or job training. This plan identifies where these transportation connections do not exist or could be improved within Rockwall County. This chapter will give an overview of the planning process, research conducted and collected, the public outreach meeting, the transportation poll used to collect personal input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Rockwall County.

PROCESS

This plan is required by federal guidance to be updated every four years. The plan must be developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors; individuals with disabilities; representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation; human services providers and other members of the public. The plan is updated to address current public transportation needs of the residents of Rockwall County. Through the process and methods described, prioritized strategies were developed so that future public transportation projects can be implemented when federal and state funding becomes available. Two different types of research were conducted during this plan update: data-based and people-based.

Data-based research included obtaining, reviewing, and analyzing Census data; using Census data to

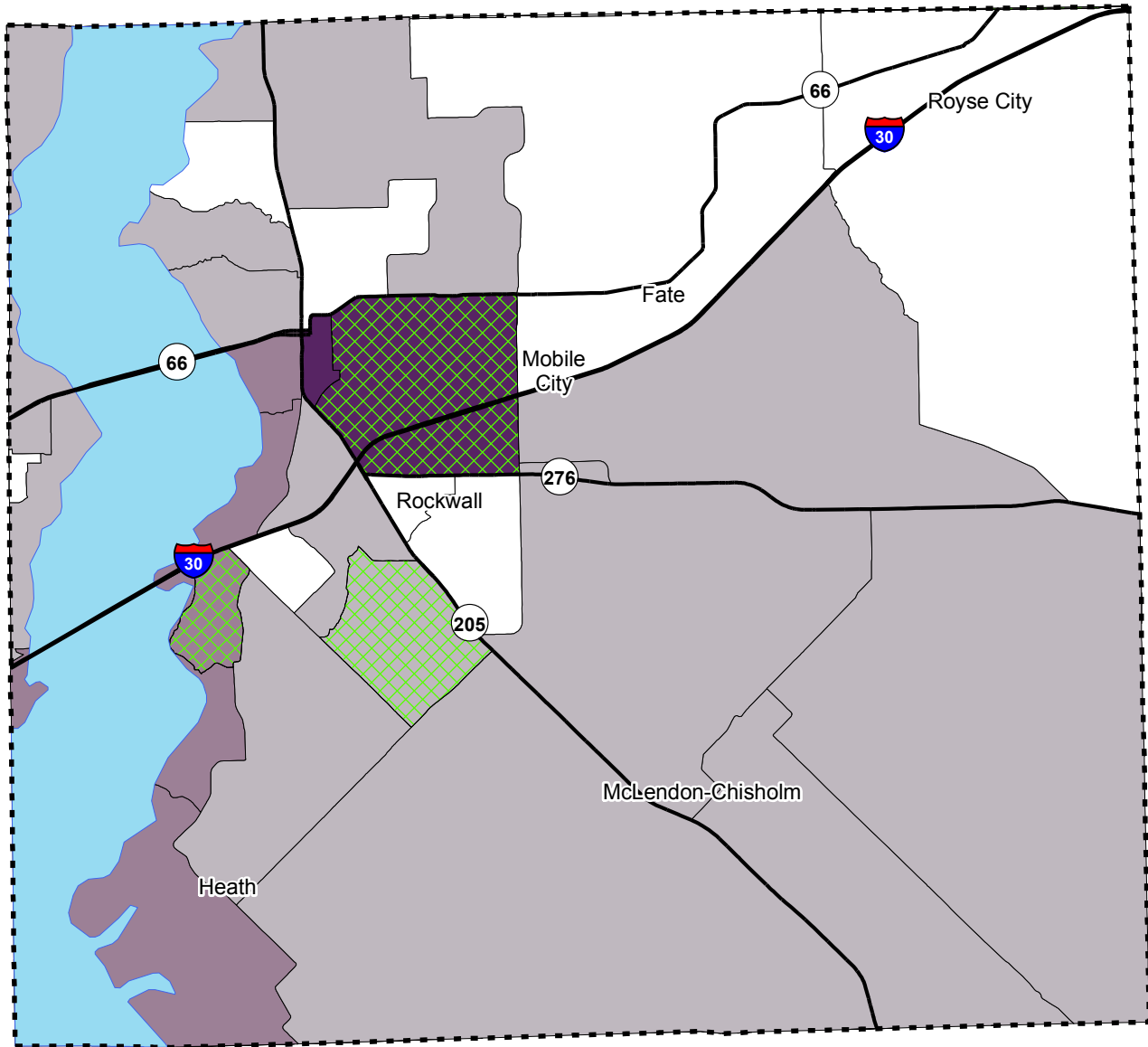
develop a mapping tool to identify locations where transit-dependent individuals may live; and identifying existing public transportation providers. The people-based research included reaching out to communities, organizations, and individuals to obtain feedback about the existing public transportation system and how it could be improved. Feedback was obtained through a public outreach meeting and a transportation poll. Through an interactive process, stakeholders prioritized concerns about transit access.

RESEARCH






The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

The TAIT was developed to identify locations with certain demographic factors that may indicate a greater need for public transportation. The populations of individuals over age 65, residents below the poverty line, and persons with disabilities were each compared to the regional percentage of the population in that demographic. A map was created based on areas that were above the regional percentage in zero, one, two, or all three of the demographic categories. The more categories that an area is deemed above the regional percentage, the more likely it is that area is to need transit. Zero car households was provided as a supplemental layer to identify households above the regional percentage that do not having a working vehicle available. The tool is useful in identifying groups of people who could benefit from transit services, but is not intended to be the deciding factor in decisions regarding public transportation.

Rockwall County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

-  All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
-  One Variable Above Regional Percentage
-  Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  All Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

In Rockwall County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentage. The areas with all three variables above the regional percentage are located north of Rockwall along I30. West and north of Heath are the only census block groups with two variables above the regional percentage, with those variables being persons age 65 and over and persons with disabilities. The block group southeast of I30 near Mobile City is the only block group with a single variable greater than the regional percentage based on a higher percentage of persons below the poverty line. The remainder of the block groups with a single variable greater than the regional percentage have a higher percentage of persons age 65 and over. Northeastern Rockwall County, the city of Rockwall, and some of the northwest part of the county have all variables at or below the regional percentage. The highest proportions of individuals 65 and older and persons living with a disability live near the city of Rockwall. Zero car households above the regional percentage are located in along I30 and SH 205 near the city of Rockwall.

Additional Demographic and Commuter Information

Rockwall County continues to experience a tremendous amount of growth. According to the American Community Survey's 2015 5-year estimates, since the 2010 Census, Rockwall County's population has increased by 9.2%. In comparison, the 16-county region has grown 6.3% in that same time period. Public transportation needs will change as the population grows. Within Rockwall County, 5.2% of residents speak English less than very well. Efforts to promote existing or new transit services should include strategies to reach this population.

According to U.S. Census employer information as of 2014, Rockwall County is home to around 22,500 jobs, with around 6,500 employees of those jobs living within the county. Around 16,000 people commute into the county for work, while around 32,000

commute out of the county for work. Around 40% of employees in the county live within 10 miles of their jobs, while the majority of commuters into the county enter from the west and southwest. The economy in Rockwall County is somewhat diverse, with the retail trade and health care and social assistance industries proving one-third of the jobs. Employees in the county are fairly well educated, with around 43% of workers either having some college experience or a degree.

Transportation Resources

STAR Transit is the main transportation provider in Rockwall County. They provide demand response service to older adults and individuals with disabilities. STAR Transit also operates the Medicaid transportation in Rockwall County. Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) also operates one vanpool that originates in the county.

See Appendix B-4, Private Carriers, for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

OUTREACH MEETING

A public meeting for Rockwall County took place at Texas A&M University – Commerce at Rockwall on March 21, 2017. 67 invitations were mailed and emailed to interested parties throughout the county. Meeting announcements and information were also posted online, and invitees were encouraged to share the invitation with partner organizations and clients to help promote the meetings. A total of 25 people attended the meeting.

Following a general welcome and presentation about public transit within the county, staff led an interactive keypad polling session to instigate discussion of transportation issues with attendees. Based on discussion question answers, community members prioritized current issues in the county and re-prioritized strategies from the 2013 Access North Texas Plan.

The highest need that was identified in the public outreach meeting was the need to improve access to medical appointments in the city of Rockwall, mental wellness clinics, the YMCA, grocery stores and the Texas Workforce Commission in Dallas. The Texas Workforce Commission in Dallas is an important destination because it's necessary for some individuals to improve skills allowing them to return to work. Attendees also expressed that better information about available transportation resources is necessary. Those that already know and use STAR Transit find it incredibly valuable and noted it is the only way older adults and people with disabilities are able to get around.

A veteran's representative identified that Rockwall County veterans' transit needs include medical and counseling appointments in Dallas, the VA clinics in Dallas, Greenville, and Bonham, as well as local trips. Veterans who do not qualify for the VA's transportation have to find other ways to reach their appointments.

TRANSPORTATION POLL

A transportation poll was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper, and available in English and Spanish. The poll collected first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations. Individual poll data revealed personal experiences with transportation. Polls completed by organizations on behalf of their clients explained issues seen by advocates of the people served by each organization. Both forms of the poll provide personal views of the public transportation system.

Rockwall County residents submitted twenty-two responses to the transportation poll. The average age of respondents is 67, with the youngest 19 and the oldest 90. Fourteen respondents said they get a ride with family or friends and eight said they take public transportation or the bus or van of a community organization or other agency for their transportation needs. Six respondents reported missing trips over the previous six months, with three responding they missed

medical appointments or shopping trips. Those who missed trips cited not having a car or someone to drive available as the reason for missing their trip. Nine respondents reported an interest in local bus service and five respondents are interested in commuter bus service.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders thought should be implemented over the next few years. These strategies build upon the progress that has taken place since the 2013 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Rockwall County Prioritized Strategies

Rockwall Strategy 1 Improve access to:

1. Medical appointments in Rockwall
2. Mental wellness clinics
3. YMCA
4. Grocery stores
5. Texas Workforce Commission in Dallas

Rockwall Strategy 2 Create and maintain a coordinating committee to discuss ongoing transportation needs

Rockwall Strategy 3 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Rockwall Strategy 4 Improve transit connections across county borders, particularly for medical appointments and access to education

Rockwall Strategy 5 Coordinate with local residences, businesses, medical centers, and other organizations to group trips to improve efficiency and the rider's experience

Rockwall Strategy 6 Advocate for agencies to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Rockwall Strategy 7 Continue to conduct targeted marketing to local agencies about existing transporta-

tion resources

Rockwall Strategy 8 Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure public transportation resources are up-to-date

Regional Strategies for Coordinated Public Transportation

Much like the county strategies, the regional strategies may also be applicable to Rockwall County.

Regional Strategy 1 In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit

Regional Strategy 2 Continue and expand projects that have a no-wrong-door approach to accessing transit or information about available transit

Regional Strategy 3 Create partnerships to simplify regional trips and reduce the number of transfers between providers

Regional Strategy 4 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Regional Strategy 5 Work towards uniform, regional fares to simplify and reduce the cost of regional trips for riders

Regional Strategy 6 Advocate to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Regional Strategy 7 Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate non-traditional ways to deliver public transportation service, including partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, and transportation network companies

Regional Strategy 8 Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transit through leadership or policy initiatives and to advocate for increasing investment in public transit

Implementing the Plan

Transportation providers and local stakeholders will collaborate to determine next steps, form needed partnerships, identify and pursue funding, and ultimately

implement selected strategies. Organizations that want to implement a strategy listed in this plan will need to develop strong partnerships with transportation providers, stakeholder agencies, communities, and counties. NCTCOG staff is available to help organizations identify potential partners and coordination opportunities. Organizations should also identify potential funding sources, which can be a mix of private and public funds, including funds from local, state, and federal sources. Local funds from public and private sources are important to demonstrate a community or organizational commitment to implementing specific strategies. Local funds are especially important to leverage state and federal dollars. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and NCTCOG have regular calls for projects to award federal funds that support projects and strategies listed in this plan.

Characteristics of a highly competitive project:

- Is multi-year. A three year request is recommended for projects providing transit service;
- Identifies an existing public transit provider or existing non-profit transportation provider when proposing to provide transit service;
- Targets individuals with lower incomes for requests of Urbanized Area Formula Program (Job Access/Reverse Commute projects) funds;
- Targets older adults and individuals with disabilities for requests of Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds; and
- Supports one or more strategies outlined in this plan.

If a project is funded through NCTCOG or TxDOT, staff will document the project funding in the Transportation Improvement Program, coordinate necessary approvals, develop contract agreements, and work with implementing agencies to manage the project and all compliance activities associated with

federal or state funding.

APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Rockwall County, please see Appendix C-Rockwall, available online at www.accessnorthtexas.org. The Public Transportation Toolbox (see Appendix B-3) highlights transit services that can be implemented in the near term to meet specific needs within Rockwall County.

See Appendix B-4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix B-5, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed.

See Appendix B-6, Transportation Poll, for more information about the transportation poll.

TARRANT COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to improve public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. These populations can have difficulty finding public transportation options that connect them to doctor's appointments, work opportunities and education or job training. This plan identifies where these transportation connections do not exist or could be improved within Tarrant County. This chapter will give an overview of the planning process, research conducted and collected, public outreach, the transportation poll used to collect personal input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Tarrant County.

PROCESS

This plan is required by federal guidance to be updated every four years. The plan must be developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors; individuals with disabilities; representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation; human services providers and other members of the public. The plan is updated to address current public transportation needs of the residents of Tarrant County. Through the process and methods described, prioritized strategies were developed so that future public transportation projects can be implemented when federal and State funding becomes available. Two different types of research were conducted during this plan update: data-based and people-based.

Data-based research included obtaining, reviewing, and analyzing Census data; using Census data to develop a mapping tool to identify locations where transit-dependent individuals may live; and identifying existing public transportation providers. The

people-based research included reaching out to communities, organizations, and individuals to obtain feedback about the existing public transportation system and how it could be improved. Feedback was obtained through public outreach meetings and a transportation poll. Through an interactive process, stakeholders prioritized concerns about transit access.

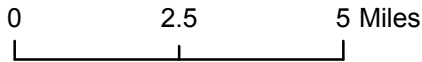
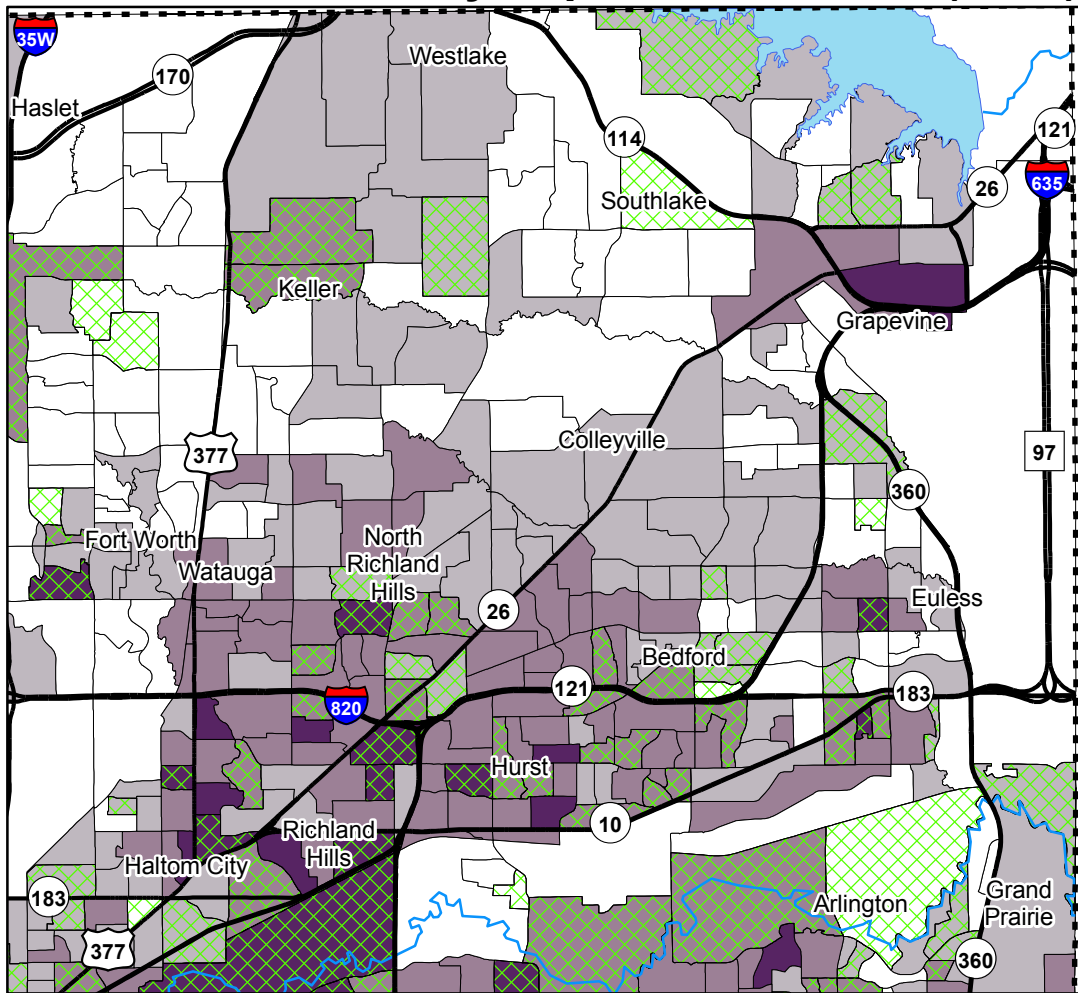
RESEARCH

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

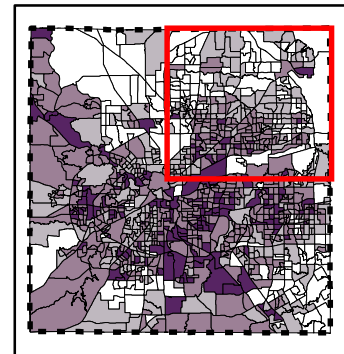
The TAIT was developed to identify locations with certain demographic factors that may indicate a greater need for public transportation. The populations of individuals over age 65, residents below the poverty line, and persons with disabilities were each compared to the regional percentage of the population in that demographic. A map was created based on areas that were above the regional percentage in zero, one, two, or all three of the demographic categories. The more categories that an area is deemed above the regional percentage, the more likely it is that area is to need transit. Zero car households was provided as a supplemental layer to identify households above the regional percentage that do not have a working vehicle available. The tool is useful in identifying groups of people who could benefit from transit services, but is not intended to be the deciding factor in decisions regarding public transportation.

In northeast Tarrant County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentages. These areas are primarily south of I820, near Richland Hills and






Northeast Tarrant County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



Tarrant County



Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

-  All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
-  One Variable Above Regional Percentage
-  Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  All Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



North Central Texas
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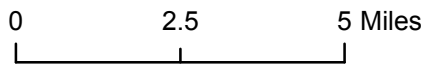
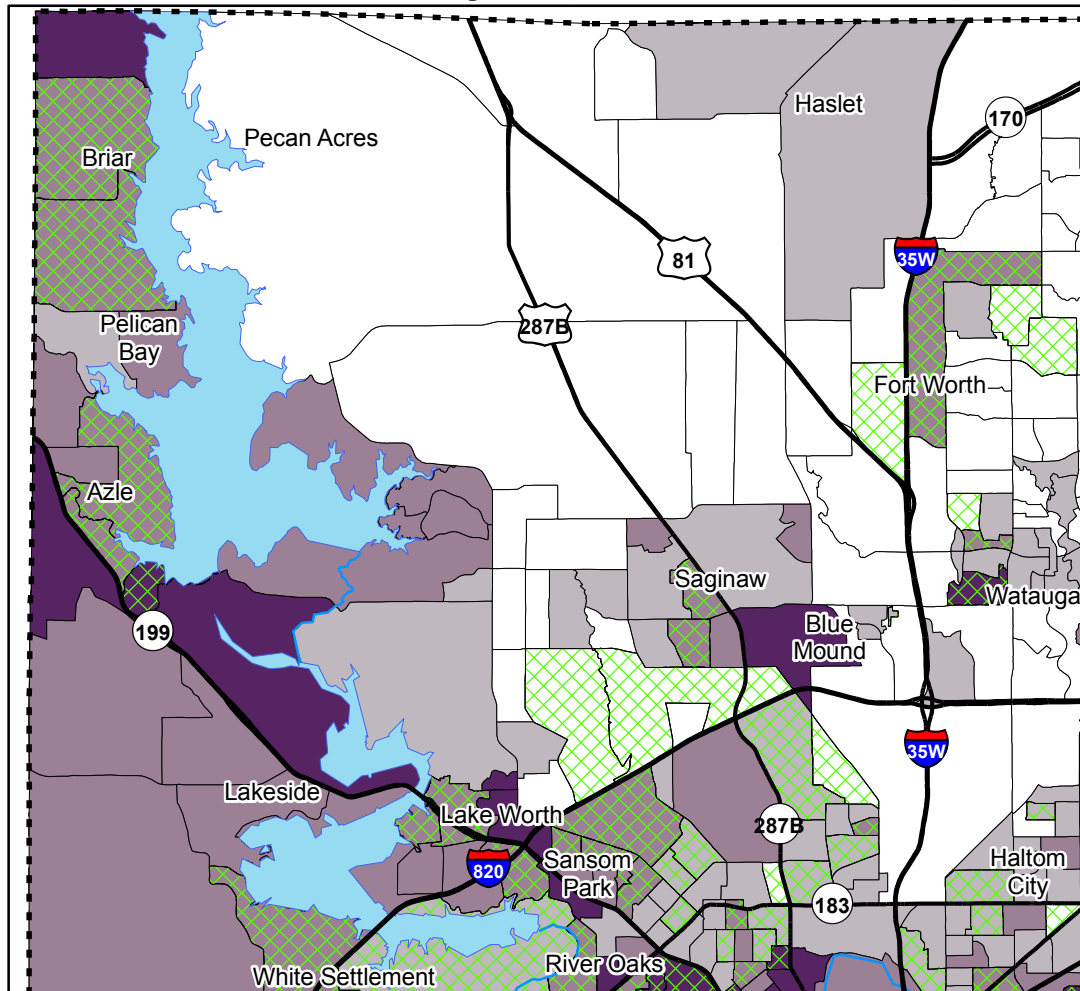
Hurst, with a few block groups in North Richland Hills, west of Watauga, and in Grapevine. Areas with only two variables above the regional percentage are mainly in the central and south central parts of this quadrant of Tarrant County. The vast majority of census block groups with two variables contain higher percentages of persons age 65 and over and persons with disabilities. Nearly all census block groups in northeast Tarrant County with only one variable above the regional percentage see higher numbers of persons age 65 and over. North of SH 26 in Grapevine, along the US 377 corridor south of Haltom City, and along the SH 360 corridor in Grand Prairie, the only variable above the regional percentage is persons below the poverty line. The SH 170, SH 114, and US 377 corridors in the northern part of northeast Tarrant County are the main areas with all three variables at or below the regional percentage. Some census block groups in Euless, Colleyville, Fort Worth, and Arlington are also at or below the regional percentage for all variables. Zero car households are mainly south of the I820 and SH 121 corridors, though some census blocks containing zero car households above the regional percentages are scattered throughout northeast Tarrant County.

In northwest Tarrant County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentages. These areas are mainly located along SH 199 in the western part of the northwest quadrant of Tarrant County, as well as in Blue Mound and Watauga. Census block groups with two variables above the regional percentage are mainly in the SH 199 corridor as well. Almost all of these census blocks see a higher level of persons age 65 and older and persons with disabilities. The census block groups with two variables highlighted along I35W as well as the southern areas in this quadrant see higher levels of persons age 65 and older and persons below the poverty line. The census block groups with a single variable above the regional percentage in the southern part of this quadrant are predominantly persons age 65 and older or persons below the poverty line, while

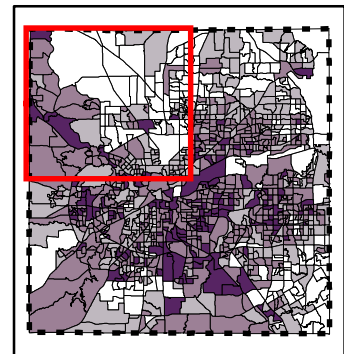
the central and northern census block groups have higher percentages of either persons with disabilities or persons below the poverty line. The north, central, and eastern parts of northwest Tarrant County see areas with all three variables at or below the regional percentage. Zero car households are predominantly in the southern part of this quadrant, with other areas near Briar, Pelican Bay, Azle, and north of Watauga.

In southwest Tarrant County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentages. These areas include the I35W Corridor, the I30 corridor, SH 121, and US 377 near Benbrook. Several areas in this quadrant of Tarrant County have two variables above the regional percentage. Along the US 377 corridor and in the northern part of the quadrant, the majority of census block groups see persons age 65 and over and persons with disabilities above the regional percentage. Along and east of I35W, the majority of block groups above the regional percentage see higher levels of persons below the poverty line and persons with disabilities. The areas in Southwest Tarrant County where only one variable is above the regional percentage are mainly in the central and western parts of the quadrant. The block groups around Crowley in the southern part of the quadrant are evenly distributed between persons with disabilities and persons below the poverty line. The northwest part of southwest Tarrant County sees mostly persons age 65 and over above the regional percentage, while the areas north of I20 are dispersed across all three variables. Between SH 121 and I35W in southern and west of US 377 in the western part of southwest Tarrant County are the main areas where all three variables are below the regional percentage. There are also a few census block groups with all three variables below the regional percentage scattered in Fort Worth. Zero car households in this quadrant are most prevalent north of I20 and east of I820. South of I20, there are also several census block groups above the regional percentage for zero car households, especially along SH 121.






Northwest Tarrant County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



Tarrant County



Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

-  All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
-  One Variable Above Regional Percentage
-  Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  All Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

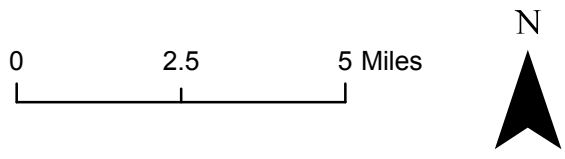
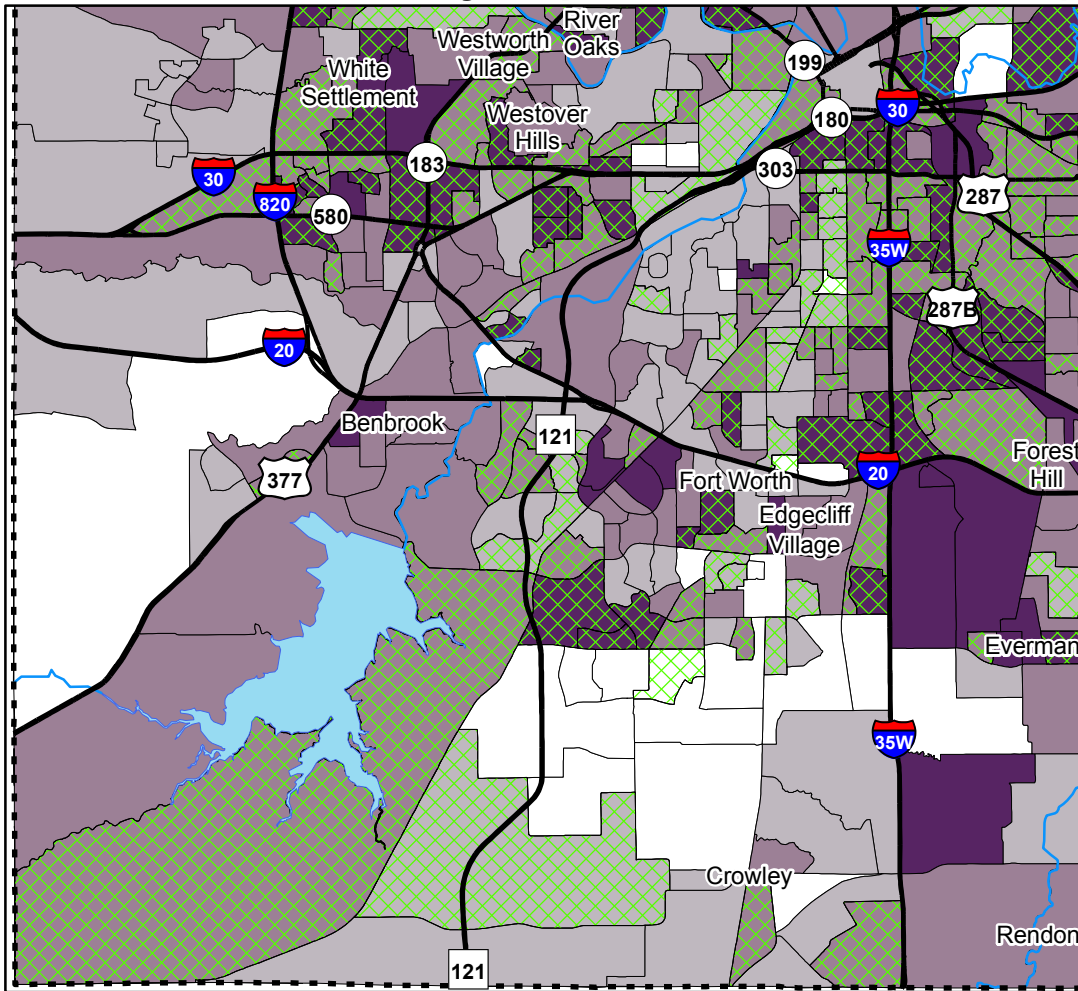
The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

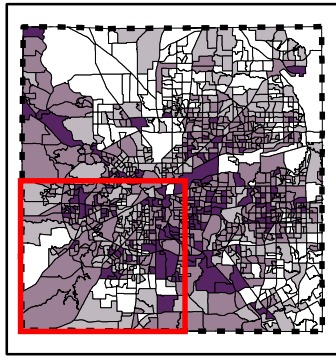


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Southwest Tarrant County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



Tarrant County



Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

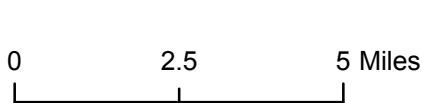
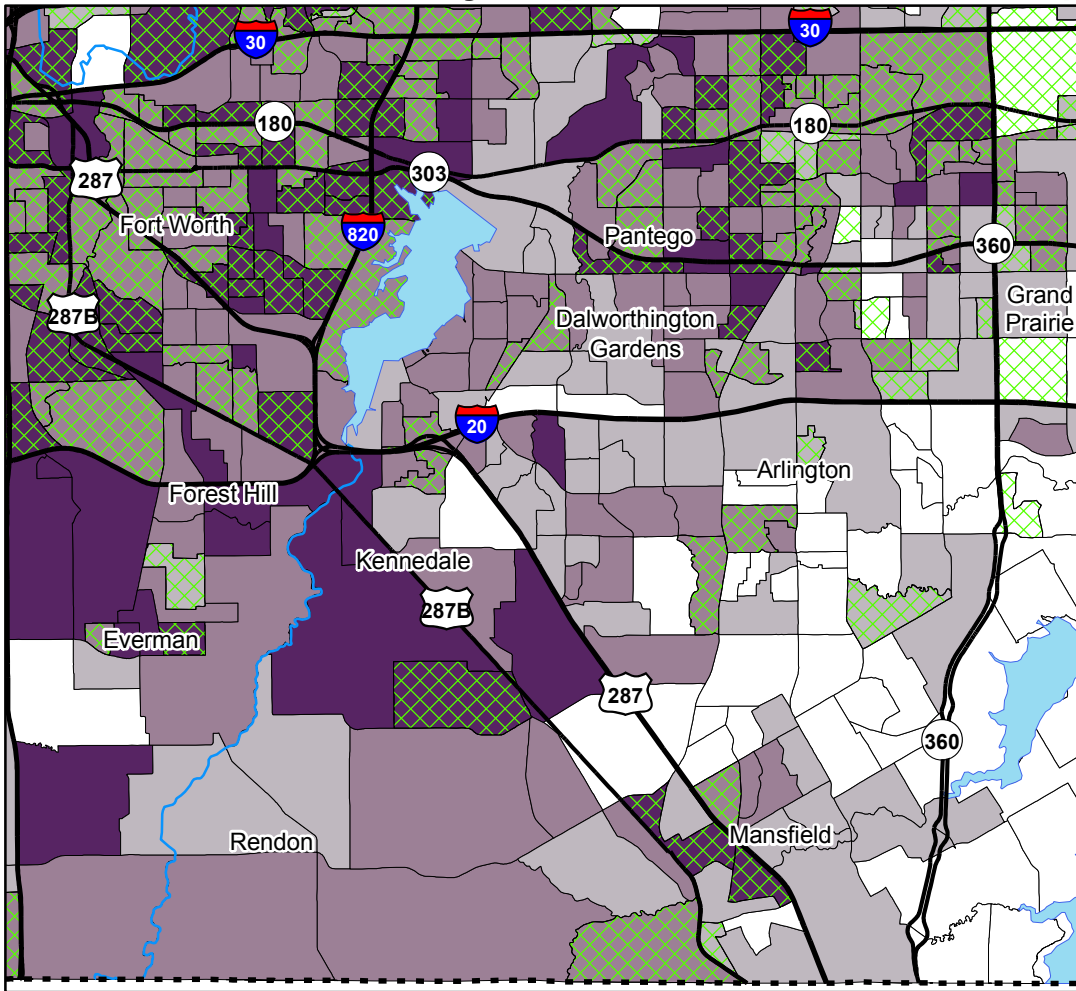
-  All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
-  One Variable Above Regional Percentage
-  Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  All Variables Above Regional Percentage
-  Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

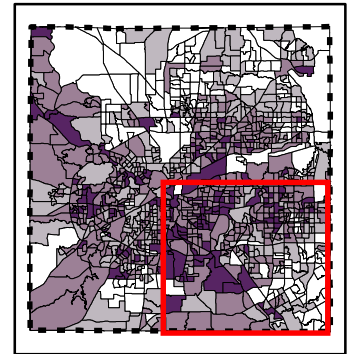
Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Southeast Tarrant County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



**Tarrant
County**



Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

- All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
- One Variable Above Regional Percentage
- Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
- All Variables Above Regional Percentage
- Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



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In southeast Tarrant County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentages. These areas are mainly along I820 in Fort Worth, US 287 and US 287 Business in Kennedale and Mansfield, and along SH 180 and SH 303 in the northern part of the southeast quadrant of Tarrant County. Areas with two variables above the regional percentage are mostly located in the north and west parts of the quadrant. North of US 180 and east of I820, as well as east of US 287 in Arlington and Mansfield. Most block groups with two variables above the regional percentage contain higher numbers of persons age 65 and over and persons with disabilities. Areas with only one variable above the regional percentage are mainly in the southern and eastern parts of the quadrant. South of I20 and east of US 287, most block groups are higher in either persons age 65 and over or persons with disabilities. In the northern part of the quadrant, and near the SH 303 and SH 360 intersection, the single variable above the regional percentage is persons below the poverty line. Areas where all three variables are below the regional percentages are predominantly in the southeastern part of the quadrant, with some block groups interspersed within the northeastern and western parts of the quadrant. Zero car households above the regional percentage are mainly located north of I20 throughout the northern part of the county. Some areas in southern Arlington and Mansfield, as well as in Everman, and south of Kennedale also see zero car households above the regional percentage.

Additional Demographic and Commuter Information

Tarrant County continues to experience a steady amount of growth. According to the American Community Survey's 2015 5-year estimates, since the 2010 Census, Tarrant County's population has increased by 5.8%. In comparison, the 16-county region has grown 6.3% in that same time period. Public transportation needs will change as the population grows. Additionally, within Tarrant County, 12.6% of residents speak

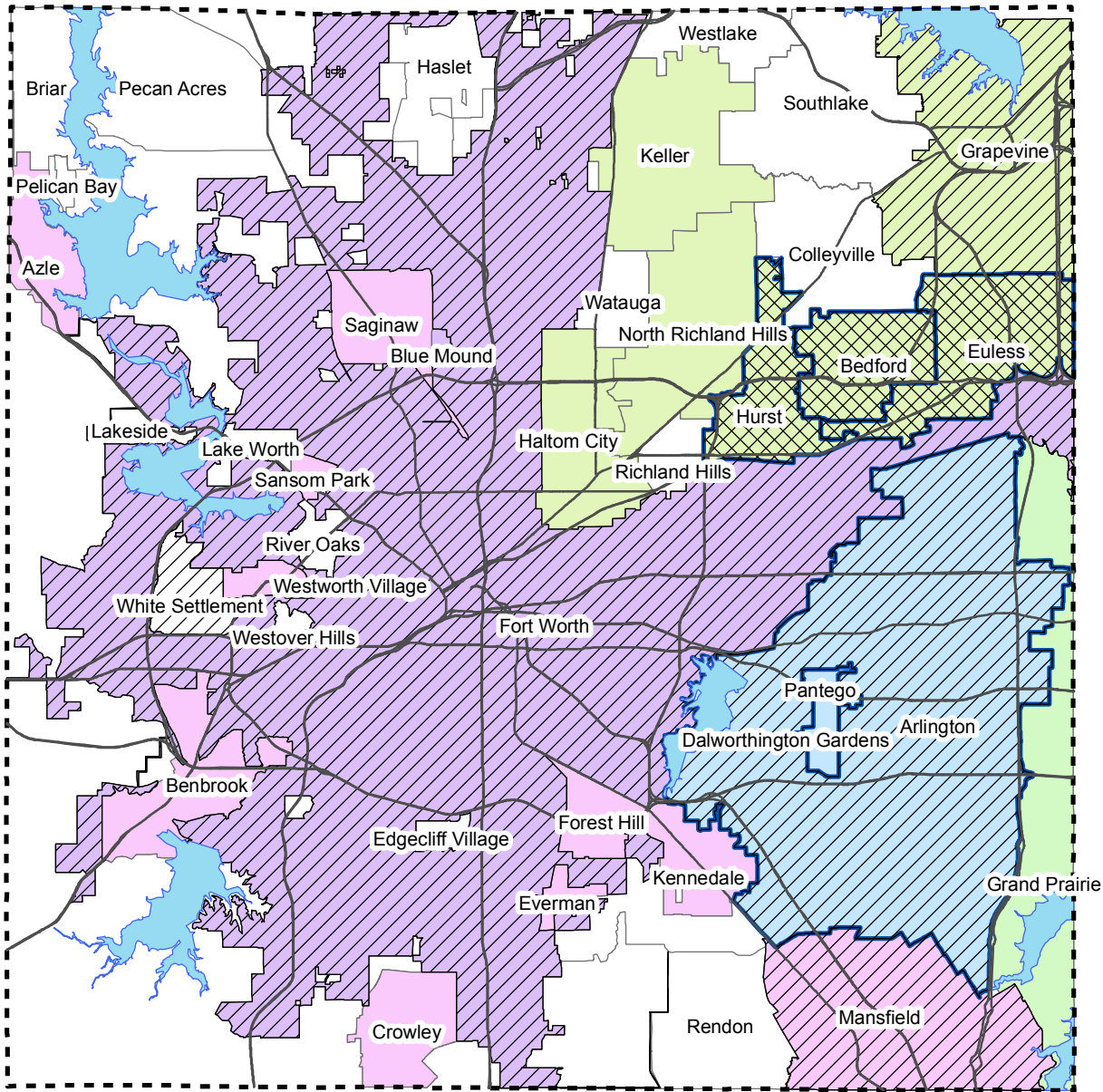
English less than very well and information about available transit services may be difficult for these individuals to access if it is provided only in English.









According to U.S. Census employer information as of 2014, Tarrant County is home to around 811,000 jobs, with around 473,000 employees also residing within the county. Around 338,500 workers commute into the county, while 332,000 people commute out of the county to access their jobs. 40% of employees living in Tarrant County reside within 10 miles of their place of employment, while commuters in the county generally enter from the east or south. The economy in Tarrant County is diversified, though around one-third of jobs are provided by the Health Care and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, and Retail Trade industries. Employees in the county are well educated, with around 46% of workers possessing either some college experience or a degree.

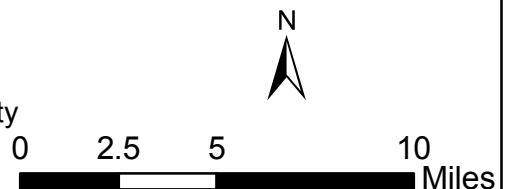
Transportation Resources

There are a handful of transportation options within Tarrant County. The Fort Worth Transportation Authority (FWTA, previously referred to as "The T"), is the main transportation provider with services including local bus service in Fort Worth, Blue Mound and River Oaks. FWTA offers Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service in same three cities. FWTA, in partnership with the Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA), operates bus service that connects downtown Fort Worth with Denton with stops in Alliance. FWTA, DCTA, and Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) operate commuter vanpools in Tarrant County. In total, 48 vanpools originate in Tarrant County, while 53 vanpools arrive in the county as their destination. Additionally, the Trinity Railway Express (TRE) is jointly owned and operated by FWTA and DART and connects Fort Worth to Dallas and points in between.

Tarrant County Transportation Providers



-  Fort Worth Transportation Authority (FWTA)
-  Handitran
-  Grand Connection
-  HEB Transit
-  Ride2Work
-  Northeast Transportation Service (NETS)
-  Tarrant County Transportation Services (TCTS)
-  Senior Citizens Services of Greater Tarrant County



There are also specialized transportation providers in Tarrant County including HandiTran that provides door-to-door, on demand transportation for individuals with disabilities and older adults in the city of Arlington. Northeast Transportation Services (NETS) and Tarrant County Transportation Services (TCTS) provide transportation for people with disabilities in participating cities. Catholic Charities of Fort Worth’s transportation programs provide transportation in Tarrant County to older adults and people with disabilities who are unable to access other transit providers.

My Ride Tarrant is a project of MHMR of Tarrant County that focuses on connecting Tarrant County residents to transportation resources and providers. Tarrant Riders Network is a coalition of stakeholders in Tarrant County that have a vested interest in improving public transportation options within the county.

See Appendix B-4, Private Carriers, for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with them to provide specific service for clients.

Despite the variety and complexity of services available in Tarrant County, gaps in service still exist due to factors such as eligibility and geographic limitations. Opportunities for improved coordination among transportation providers also exist where providers serve transit-dependent populations in similar geographies. There are some barriers for riders looking to travel between cities with different providers, rural areas and seamless connections into Dallas County.

OUTREACH MEETINGS

NCTCOG partnered with the Tarrant Riders Network (TRN) to conduct outreach meetings in Tarrant County. A total of eight focus groups and 120 interviews with individuals were conducted. 453 invitations were mailed and emailed to interested parties

throughout the county. A total of 231 people attended the meetings.

The TRN, over six months, engaged with stakeholders to identify ongoing and future transportation needs, barriers to success, and possible solutions to problems. Their two-stage engagement process started with seeking stakeholder input on the transportation domains of greatest concern on November 7, 2016. Participants included elected officials and their staff; state, regional, local agency representatives; health insurance companies, and publicly funded transportation providers. Consensus was achieved on several areas where significant attention and investment is needed. TRN stakeholders identified four areas as priorities:

1. Access to wellness,
2. Access to employment,
3. Access to community, and
4. Access to existing services.

Access Domains by Priority



Having determined the domains of greatest importance, participants identified top priorities for action. These priorities, identified by the largest number of participant votes, were:

1. Developing county-wide public transportation services.
2. Pairing vouchers with an array of public/private transportation options.
3. Using service participants as drivers and coordinating passengers for rideshare programs.
4. Eliminating barriers for individuals re-entering the community from the justice system.
5. Coordinating services with medical providers, pairing available appointments and trips.

As part of the second phase of public involvement, on May 17, 2017, the TRN held a general interest meeting with over 60 participants that included citizens, elected officials, government staff, and policy experts. The group developed a list of priorities and identified key barriers. The key barriers that were identified through the process are as follows:

- Lack of affordable, reliable, and dependable mobility options for all Tarrant County residents.
 - Lack of countywide mobility services.
 - Limited available transportation services infrastructure throughout the county.
 - Limited availability of affordable mobility options at needed days and times, particularly in the early evening and on weekends.
 - Limited on-demand mobility options, outside of those provided by for-profit providers.
 - Limited accessible mobility options provided by for-profit providers.
 - Lack of accessible complimentary infrastructure to mobility options.

- Lack of knowledge among the general public and the business sector of existing mobility options.
- Lack of flexible funding options to provide service when trips require multiple providers.
 - Lack of mobility services for employment, particularly for those who work outside of the traditional Monday- Friday, 8 – 5 p.m. schedule.
- Lack of coordinated infrastructure yields a process that is not user friendly and slows response time.
- Lack of reliable transportation services that can viably link a patient to the multiple locations and timing of wellness services.
 - Medical services, particularly specialty services, are limited. Transportation services that viably connect patients to care may not be available because they are scattered geographically across the county.
 - Critical services such as kidney dialysis and outpatient surgery centers may require patients to arrive before 6 a.m., hours before many transportation providers begin service.
 - To ensure continued stability and improvement; services such as kidney dialysis, wound care and rehabilitation may require a specific schedule of treatment, including weekend care. For those relying on services, other than the Fort Worth Transportation Authority, accessing appointments on weekends has traditionally required more expensive, for-profit providers, such as taxis.
 - Transportation to same-day, non-emergency medical services is highly limited often resulting in system inefficiencies.

See Appendix C-Tarrant County for the Tarrant Riders Network Strategic Outcomes and Priorities for more information on the public involvement process, as well

as additional details from stakeholder interviews.

TRANSPORTATION POLL

A transportation poll was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper, and available in English and Spanish. The poll collected first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations. Individual poll data revealed personal experiences with transportation. Polls completed by organizations on behalf of their clients explained issues seen by advocates of the people served by each organization. Both forms of the poll provide personal views of the public transportation system. Respondents totaled 155 from Tarrant County.

34% of individuals indicated that they get a ride with a friend or family member while 17% use rail or bus service to get where they need to go. The top reasons individuals couldn't get where they needed to go included public transportation takes too long, there is no public transportation available, and no one is available to give them a ride. The transportation services that sounded most appealing to survey takers were community-wide dial-a-ride service, commuter bus service, and local bus service.

A number of individuals noted that transit connections to and from Arlington need to be improved for multiple trip purposes. Important destinations include Fort Worth and Dallas. Respondents from other suburban communities in Tarrant County, such as Azle, Forest Hill, Everman, and the mid-cities identified Fort Worth and the Fort Worth Veterans Administration Outpatient Clinic as destinations that need improved transit options. Additionally, some poll respondents noted that improved county-wide transportation was necessary.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders thought should be implemented over the next few years. These strategies build upon the progress

that has taken place since the 2013 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Prioritized Strategies

Tarrant Strategy 1 Increase affordable mobility solutions:

1. Develop public-private and community partnerships, including joint pursuit of funding, to offset passenger and provider costs as a means of expanding access
2. Develop incentivized ride-sharing solutions

Tarrant Strategy 2 Connect communities county-wide and across the region

1. Expand and connect existing and future transportation services
2. Develop mobility solutions that meet community needs
3. Enhance communication and coordination between community partners and service providers
4. Coordinate trip scheduling and service information infrastructure

Tarrant Strategy 3 Expand public awareness, education, skills development, and traveler support services

1. Engage individuals with disabilities, older adults, families with lower incomes, those re-entering the community from the justice system, or others who lack access to reliable transportation
2. Provide ongoing education and skills development to engage employers, employer associations, community partners, medical practitioners, and transportation providers

Tarrant Strategy 4 Implement a holistic approach to wellness transportation

1. Integrate transportation-appointment service options
2. Collaborate with insurance companies, medical service providers and others to respond to barriers to wellness

Regional Strategies for Coordinated Public Transportation

Regional strategies may also be applicable to Tarrant County.

Regional Strategy 1 In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit

Regional Strategy 2 Continue and expand projects that have a no-wrong-door approach to accessing transit or information about available transit

Regional Strategy 3 Create partnerships to simplify regional trips and reduce the number of transfers between providers

Regional Strategy 4 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Regional Strategy 5 Work towards uniform, regional fares to simplify and reduce the cost of regional trips for riders

Regional Strategy 6 Advocate to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Regional Strategy 7 Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate non-traditional ways to deliver public transportation service, including partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, and transportation network companies

Regional Strategy 8 Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transit through leadership or policy initiatives and to advocate for increasing investment in public transit

Implementing the Plan

Transportation providers and local stakeholders will collaborate to determine next steps, form needed partnerships, identify and pursue funding, and ultimately implement selected strategies. Organizations that want to implement a strategy listed in this plan will need to develop strong partnerships with transportation providers, stakeholder agencies, communities, and counties. NCTCOG staff is available to help

organizations identify potential partners and coordination opportunities. Organizations should also identify potential funding sources, which can be a mix of private and public funds, including funds from local, state, and federal sources. Local funds from public and private sources are important to demonstrate a community or organizational commitment to implementing specific strategies. Local funds are especially important to leverage state and federal dollars. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and NCTCOG have regular calls for projects to award federal funds that support projects and strategies listed in this plan.

Characteristics of a highly competitive project:

- Is multi-year. A three year request is recommended for projects providing transit service;
- Identifies an existing public transit provider or existing non-profit transportation provider when proposing to provide transit service;
- Targets individuals with lower incomes for requests of Urbanized Area Formula Program (Job Access/Reverse Commute projects) funds;
- Targets older adults and individuals with disabilities for requests of Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds; and
- Supports one or more strategies outlined in this plan.

If a project is funded through NCTCOG or TxDOT, staff will document the project funding in the Transportation Improvement Program, coordinate necessary approvals, develop contract agreements, and work with implementing agencies to manage the project and all compliance activities associated with federal or state funding.

APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Tarrant County, please see Appendix C-Tarrant, available online at

www.accessnorthtexas.org. The Public Transportation Toolbox (see Appendix B-3) highlights transit services that can be implemented in the near term to meet specific needs within Tarrant County.

See Appendix B-4, Private Carriers, for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix B-5, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed.

See Appendix B-6, Transportation Poll, for more information about the transportation poll.

WISE COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to improve public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. These populations can have difficulty finding public transportation options that connect them to doctor's appointments, work opportunities and education or job training. This plan identifies where these transportation connections do not exist or could be improved within Wise County. This chapter will give an overview of the planning process, the research conducted and collected, the public outreach meeting, the transportation poll used to collect personal input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Wise County.

PROCESS

This plan is required by federal guidance to be updated every four years. The plan must be developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors; individuals with disabilities; representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation; human services providers and other members of the public. The plan is updated to address current public transportation needs of the residents of Wise County. Through the process and methods described, prioritized strategies were developed so that future public transportation projects can be implemented when federal and state funding becomes available. Two different types of research were conducted during this plan update: data-based and people-based.

Data-based research included obtaining, reviewing, and analyzing Census data; using Census data to

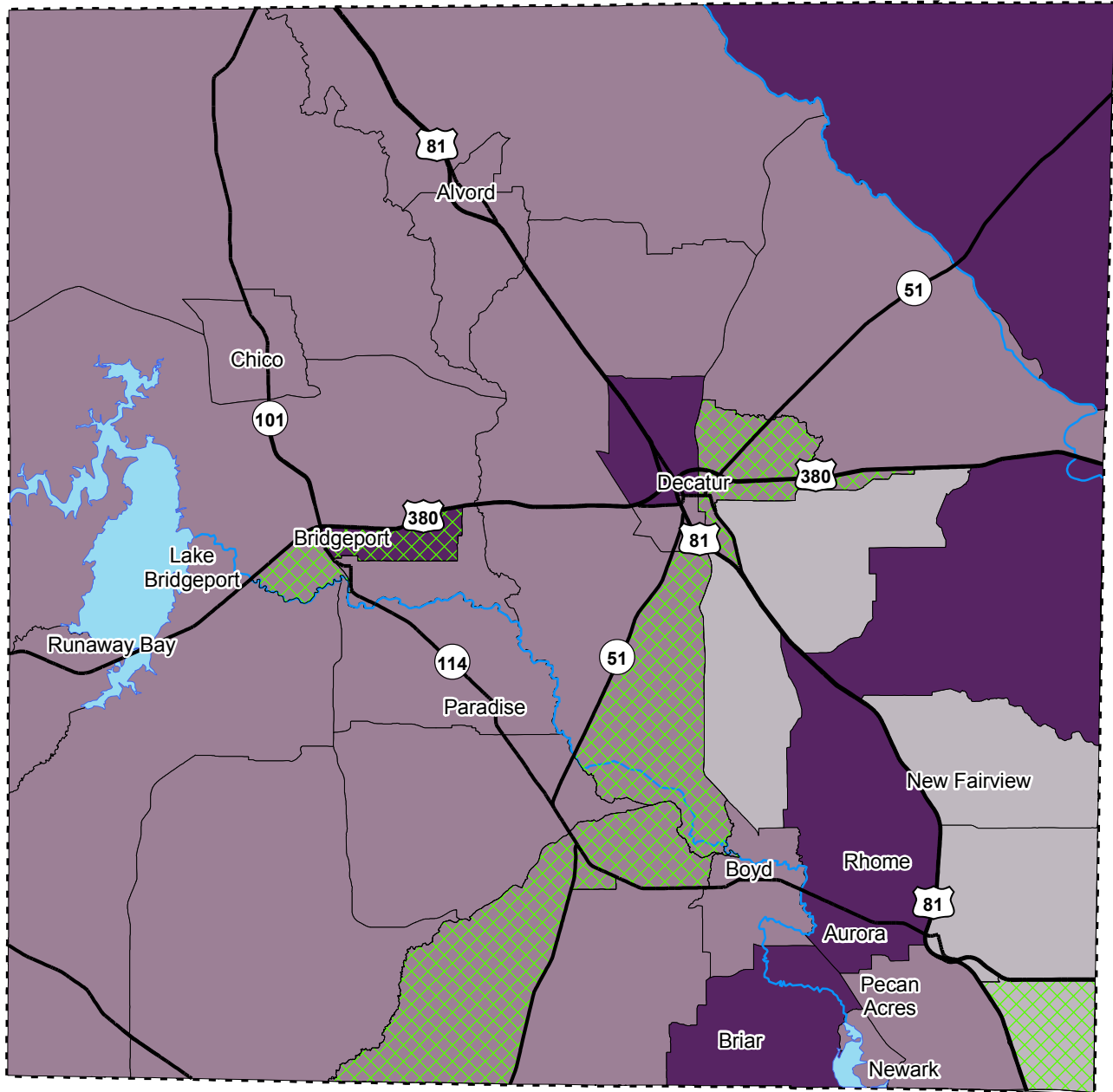
develop a mapping tool to identify locations where transit-dependent individuals may live; and identifying existing public transportation providers. The people-based research included reaching out to communities, organizations, and individuals to obtain feedback about the existing public transportation system and how it could be improved. Feedback was obtained through a public outreach meeting and a transportation poll. Through an interactive process, stakeholders prioritized concerns about transit access.

RESEARCH

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

The TAIT was developed to identify locations with certain demographic factors that may indicate a greater need for public transportation. The populations of individuals over age 65, residents below the poverty line, and persons with disabilities were each compared to the regional percentage of the population in that demographic. A map was created based on areas that were above the regional percentage in zero, one, two, or all three of the demographic categories. The more categories that an area is deemed above the regional percentage, the more likely it is that area is to need transit. Zero car households was provided as a supplemental layer to identify households above the regional percentage that do not have a working vehicle available. The tool is useful in identifying groups of people who could benefit from transit services, but is not intended to be the deciding factor in decisions regarding public transportation.

Wise County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



0 2.5 5 Miles

N

Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities

- All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
- One Variable Above Regional Percentage
- Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
- All Variables Above Regional Percentage
- Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

In Wise County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentages. These areas are mostly in the rural eastern part of the county, with block groups also located along the US 380 and SH 51 corridors in Decatur and south of US 380 in Bridgeport. Except for Chico, all census block groups with two variables above the regional percentage have a higher percentage of persons age 65 and over and persons with disabilities. Chico has a higher percentage of persons below the poverty line and persons with disabilities. All areas with a single variable above the regional percentage have a higher percentage of persons with disabilities. There are no census block groups with all three variables below the regional percentages. Zero car households above the regional percentage are located south of US 380 in Bridgeport, along the SH 51 and US 380 corridors near Decatur, and the rural southeast corner of Wise County.

Additional Demographic and Commuter Information

Wise County continues to experience a steady amount of growth. According to the American Community Survey's 2015 5-year estimates, since the 2010 Census, Wise County's U.S. Census' population has increased by 3.6%. In comparison, the 16-county region has grown 6.3% in that same time period. Public transportation needs will change as the population grows. Within Wise County, 5.6% of residents speak English less than very well. Efforts to promote existing or new transit services should include strategies to reach this population.

According to U.S. Census employer information as of 2014, Wise County is home to 21,000 jobs, with around 8,000 residents also employed within the county. Almost 13,000 workers commute into the county for work, while around 16,000 workers leave the county for work. Only one-quarter of Wise County employees live within 10 miles of their workplace, with the majority of commuters entering the county

from the south and southeast. The economy in Wise County is somewhat diversified, though the mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction industry provides nearly 19% of the jobs in the county. Employees in the county are fairly well educated, with around 40% of workers having either some college experience or a degree.

Transportation Resources

The main public transportation provider is Texoma Area Paratransit System (TAPS), which serves the general public, including older adults and individuals with disabilities. TAPS' service is a demand response curb-to-curb service that is scheduled on an on-call basis. Currently, a majority of their trips serve older adults and individuals with disabilities. The Wise County Committee on Aging also provides limited transportation to older adults in the county. The Fort Worth Transportation Authority (FWTA) and Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) operate four commuter vanpools that originate in the county.

See Appendix B4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

OUTREACH MEETING

A public meeting for Wise County took place at Decatur Civic Center in Decatur on January 19, 2017. 86 invitations were mailed and emailed to interested parties throughout the county. Meeting announcements and information were also posted online, and invitees were encouraged to share the invitation with partner organizations and clients to help promote the meeting. A total of 19 people attended the meeting.

Following a general welcome and presentation about public transit within the county, staff led an interactive keypad polling session to instigate discussion of transportation issues with attendees. Based on discussion question answers, community members prioritized

current issues in the county and re-prioritized strategies from the 2013 Access North Texas Plan.

Attendees identified that additional capacity is needed for essential transit trips. These include trips to dialysis in Wise County and doctor's appointments in Wise County, Tarrant County and Denton County. There is also a need to provide additional transportation to work opportunities. Public transportation providers and school districts noted that it has been challenging to recruit and retain drivers. The most recent challenge is the Department of Transportation's (DOT) new standards to obtain or renew a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). Local workforce centers may be able to help prepare drivers looking to obtain or renew their CDL. Additionally, better information on how to access and use transit needed. The public needs more information about how to access the service, the impact of no shows and cancellations on service, and how to book a trip when a personal attendant is needed.

TRANSPORTATION POLL

A transportation poll was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper, and available in English and Spanish. The poll collected first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations. Individual poll data revealed personal experiences with transportation. Polls completed by organizations on behalf of their clients explained issues seen by advocates of the people served by each organization. Both forms of the poll provide personal views of the public transportation system.

Wise County residents submitted two responses to the poll. The ages of the respondents were 42 and 70. Both respondents drive themselves for their transportation needs, and have not missed any trips. One of the respondents is interested in seeing local bus service in Wise County.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The strategies below identify ways to address the

most important public transportation needs stakeholders thought should be implemented over the next few years. These strategies build upon the progress that has taken place since the 2013 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Wise County Prioritized Strategies

Wise Strategy 1 Improve access to:

1. Dialysis appointments
2. Out-of-county medical appointments, particularly in Tarrant County and Denton County
3. Medical facilities in the evenings and early mornings

Wise Strategy 2 Develop partnerships with non-profits, employers, medical facilities, and other partners to improve access to local and regional destinations

Wise Strategy 3 Explore partnerships to provide additional transportation for needs other than medical or work

Wise Strategy 4 Continue to conduct targeted marketing to local agencies about existing transportation resources

Wise Strategy 5 Conduct travel training or train-the-trainer that covers topics such as:

1. Available transit services
2. How to schedule a trip
3. Cost
4. Filing a complaint
5. Impact of no shows and cancellations
6. Policies for attendants and multiple riders

Wise Strategy 6 Advocate for transit agencies to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase the availability of affordable public transportation

Wise Strategy 7 Establish consistent and effective driver recruitment and retention programs for public

transportation services to address difficulties in retaining drivers in Wise County

Wise Strategy 8 Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure transportation resources are up-to-date

Wise Strategy 9 Contract with local agencies with a language program to provide translated transit info (over the phone, online, print, etc.)

Regional Strategies for Coordinated Public Transportation

Much like the county strategies, the regional strategies may also be applicable to Wise County.

Regional Strategy 1 In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit

Regional Strategy 2 Continue and expand projects that have a no-wrong-door approach to accessing transit or information about available transit

Regional Strategy 3 Create partnerships to simplify regional trips and reduce the number of transfers between providers

Regional Strategy 4 Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

Regional Strategy 5 Work towards uniform, regional fares to simplify and reduce the cost of regional trips for riders

Regional Strategy 6 Advocate to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

Regional Strategy 7 Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate non-traditional ways to deliver public transportation service, including partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, and transportation network companies

Regional Strategy 8 Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transit through leadership or policy initiatives and to advocate for increasing investment in public transit

Implementing the Plan

Transportation providers and local stakeholders will collaborate to determine next steps, form needed partnerships, identify and pursue funding, and ultimately implement selected strategies. Organizations that want to implement a strategy listed in this plan will need to develop strong partnerships with transportation providers, stakeholder agencies, communities, and counties. NCTCOG staff is available to help organizations identify potential partners and coordination opportunities. Organizations should also identify potential funding sources, which can be a mix of private and public funds, including funds from local, state, and federal sources. Local funds from public and private sources are important to demonstrate a community or organizational commitment to implementing specific strategies. Local funds are especially important to leverage state and federal dollars. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and NCTCOG have regular calls for projects to award federal funds that support projects and strategies listed in this plan.

Characteristics of a highly competitive project:

- Is multi-year. A three year request is recommended for projects providing transit service;
- Identifies an existing public transit provider or existing non-profit transportation provider when proposing to provide transit service;
- Targets individuals with lower incomes for requests of Urbanized Area Formula Program (Job Access/Reverse Commute projects) funds;
- Targets older adults and individuals with disabilities for requests of Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds; and
- Supports one or more strategies outlined in this plan.

If a project is funded through NCTCOG or TxDOT, staff will document the project funding in the

Transportation Improvement Program, coordinate necessary approvals, develop contract agreements, and work with implementing agencies to manage the project and all compliance activities associated with federal or state funding.

APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Wise County, please see Appendix C-Wise, available online at www.accessnorthtexas.org. The Public Transportation Toolbox (see Appendix B-3) highlights transit services that can be implemented in the near term to meet specific needs within Wise County.

See Appendix B-4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix B-5, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed.

See Appendix B-6, Transportation Poll, for more information about the transportation poll.

PLAN REQUIREMENTS

A coordinated public transit-human services plan is required by the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, the current federal transportation bill. Furthermore, coordination is mandated in Texas among transportation providers, health and human service agencies and workforce boards by Texas Administrative Code Chapter 461. In North Central Texas, The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is the designated lead entity responsible for preparing and maintaining the region's public transportation coordination plan.

Access North Texas provides a framework for project selection according to the requirements and guidelines described below for federal and state funding programs.

Federal Coordination Requirement

Current federal surface transportation legislation, the FAST Act, requires a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. This type of coordination plan has been recommended or required for various programs since 2004, when President Bush signed Executive Order 13330 on Human Services Transportation Coordination, and since August 2005, when the President signed into law the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

Projects funded with federal grants from the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310) of the FAST Act must be included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan that was developed and approved through a process that

included participation by seniors; individuals with disabilities; representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation; human services providers and other members of the public. Projects funded with Section 5310 grants must also, to the maximum extent feasible, be coordinated with transportation services assisted by other federal departments and agencies, including any transportation activities carried out by a recipient of a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services.

In addition, projects funded with federal grants from years prior to Fiscal Year 2013 in two additional programs, the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (Section 5316) and the New Freedom Program (Section 5317) must be derived from that locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.

Federal guidance for other transit funding programs included in the FAST Act recognizes that projects funded with Urbanized Area Formula (Section 5307) Program funds, including new or continuing job access and reverse commute projects, are not required to be developed through this coordinated planning process. However, the Federal Transit Administration encourages recipients to continue to use the coordinated planning process to identify and develop job access and reverse commute projects for funding under Section 5307. Access North Texas includes a broad approach to coordinating public transportation that considers general public transportation and services for transit-dependent populations that could be funded by all of the Federal public transportation funding programs outlined above.

State Coordination Requirement

House Bill 3588, enacted by the 78th Texas Legislature in 2003, requires the coordination of public transportation in the State of Texas. Specifically, Article 13 of the legislation created Chapter 461 of the Texas Transportation Code, entitled “Statewide Coordination of Public Transportation,” which requires the coordination of public transportation services funded with federal, state or local funds.

Chapter 461 cites the multiplicity of public transportation providers and services, coupled with a lack of coordination between state oversight agencies, as generating inefficiencies, overlaps in service, and confusion for consumers. The focus of Chapter 461 is the statewide coordination of transportation funding and resources among the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Texas Workforce Commission, and the Texas Department of Transportation. The intent is to ensure that the benefits of the state’s public transportation resources are maximized through the coordination of services. The goals of coordination are to eliminate waste in the provision of public transportation services, to generate efficiencies that will permit increased levels of service, and to further the state’s efforts to reduce air pollution.

These statewide planning requirements are reflected in coordinated public transportation planning that occurs at the regional level within the boundaries of each of the 24 Council of Governments regions. Each region prepares a public transportation coordination plan to submit to the Texas Department of Transportation highlighting transportation needs, gaps in service and strategies for coordination to address those gaps in service and needs. Access North Texas meets statewide planning requirements for the North Central Texas region.

REGIONAL REPORTS

APPENDIX B.1

ACCESS NORTH TEXAS (2013): SUMMARY AND STATUS

In 2013, the coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan for North Central Texas was updated and adopted through a process led by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). Participants included individuals representing transportation providers, transit customers, advocates, local government representatives and health and human service agencies. This plan addressed the transportation needs of older adults, individuals with disabilities, individuals with lower incomes and others with transportation challenges.

The Access North Texas plan was completed in September 2013. The plan highlighted strategies for each of the region's sixteen counties and included region-wide strategies that would improve public transportation throughout the region. County-focused priorities included a wide range of strategies such as new or improved services as well as communication and awareness initiatives. This report provides information on the status of each strategy from the 2013 plan: the chart below describes what each status means.

Status

Ongoing

Steps have taken place to address the strategy (or a part of it). It does not necessarily mean that a given strategy has been completed and that no further work is needed. Work to maintain the progress of the strategy will continue.

Under development

Activities have taken place to address the strategy (or a part of it), but concrete steps are still under development, have not started, or have not been implemented.

No progress reported

No progress has been reported for a given strategy.

More information about each county’s strategies is summarized below.

COLLIN COUNTY

Prioritized Strategies	Status
Improve access to identified clusters of employment within Collin County, including access to jobs for low-income workers	No progress reported
Expand access to regional job opportunities and improve links to the regional transit system focusing on opportunities to enhance coordination among services	No progress reported
Increase ridership, improve the quality and increase the availability of services for travel within and between communities in Collin County for those with limited transportation options including older adults, low-income residents and people with disabilities	Under development
Expand transportation options within the city of McKinney and improve inter-community access for communities such as Celina, Allen, Frisco, and Wylie	Under development

Additional Strategies	Status
Explore partnerships to improve the affordability of transit including vouchers or reduced fares for individuals who need assistance, seniors, and youth riders	No progress reported
Identify and evaluate non-traditional ways to deliver public transportation service, including partnerships among public and private transportation providers	Under development
Establish communication and outreach programs to improve the awareness of existing or new transportation options among limited English proficiency populations	No progress reported
Identify, recruit, and support influential champions for public transit to grow support for new and enhanced transit services	Under development

Collin County has a patchwork of available transportation service. The McKinney Urban Transit District (MUTD) contracts with the Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) to provide service for participating MUTD cities including McKinney, Lowry Crossing, Melissa and Princeton. Services is provided for residents 65 and older and individuals with disabilities. The city of Frisco also contracts with DCTA to provide curb-to-curb

demand response service for residents that are 65 and older, individuals with a disability, or those who need transportation to a medical appointment. Frisco residents are able to access destinations located in Frisco, McKinney, and Allen and some parts of Plano.

Dallas Area Rapid Transit’s (DART) Collin County Rides program serves residents of Allen, Fairview and Wylie that are 65 and older or who have disabilities.

For DART’s Collin County member cities, including Plano, services include light rail, local bus service, an on-call zone in north Plano, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service. Lastly, DART provides support for Plano Senior Rides, another taxi-voucher program available to Plano residents.

DALLAS COUNTY

Prioritized Strategies	Status
Continue implementation of transportation service and coordination projects:	Ongoing
<h3>Communication & Education</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Transportation Network (CTN) to host bimonthly meetings, encourage partnerships, distribute Get A Ride Guides, implement MY RIDE Dallas, implement their Strategic Communications Plan, continue work of Sensitivity Committee to improve driver sensitivity toward individuals with disabilities, continue identifying and documenting gaps in service • Continue information-sharing partnership between CTN and 211 services • Continue mobility training conducted by CTN and Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) • Launch one-click access to information (planned through a grant from the Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative) with DART as lead agency for the region • Put orientation and mobility specialists into service for visually impaired individuals using DART services • Continue growth in the ambassador program for transit system orientation of DART 	
<h3>Resources</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate job access projects for greater efficiency, including Goodwill Industries of Dallas, Urban League of Greater Dallas and North Central Texas and Metrocare Services • Launch DART’s retired vehicle program 	
<h3>Seamless Transportation Services</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish policies facilitating access to regional transportation services • Pursue innovative technology that is common among area transit agencies 	
Maintain a county coordinating committee to focus on ongoing transportation needs	Ongoing
Work with agencies receiving transportation funding to explore ways to overcome access barriers caused by programmatic regulations or lack of coordination	No progress reported

Prioritized Strategies, cont.

Status

Obtain service for underserved areas and populations including:

Ongoing

- Municipalities in south and southwest Dallas
- Job access for people with disabilities throughout Dallas County, including access to and within Mesquite
- South Dallas County including DeSoto, Duncanville, Lancaster; service needed within communities and to regional jobs and services
- Between Balch Springs and Mesquite
- Limited capacity in smaller systems including Grand Prairie and Mesquite

Identify, recruit, educate and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders or business leaders) to promote and support public transit through leadership or policy initiatives and to advocate for increasing investment in public transit

No progress reported

Create partnerships between transit agencies, municipalities and community organizations to increase the accessibility of bus stops and paths to bus and rail transit; municipal investment in accessibility projects can further support cities' investment in public transportation

Under development

Address priority regional connections including:

Ongoing

- A consistent and useful transportation link between the Veterans Affairs locations in Dallas and Fort Worth to address changes in the structure of the administration of Veterans Affairs benefits
- Public transportation connection to Arlington
- Identify additional priorities among potential regional transfer points
- Work towards safe and convenient transfer hubs to facilitate transfers between a range of regional services

Additional Strategies	Status
Plan for transportation options, additional assistance or more specialized transportation for those transit customers who are not ADA paratransit eligible but who may be too frail for regular public transportation service	Under development
Work to create a positive reputation for transit while emphasizing the value and role of transit in the region	No progress reported
Encourage innovative projects that improve transit affordability and put fares within reach for very low-income individuals and homeless	Under development
Continue to identify additional gaps in service and obtain service for underserved areas and populations, including identifying additional barriers to service and selecting projects that address specific barriers such as time and day of trips, safety and accessibility	Ongoing
Explore options for services for individuals with special medical conditions that cannot use existing services	No progress reported

Transit providers and nonprofits in Dallas County are working to implement some of the strategies from the 2013 plan. The Community Transportation Network (CTN), now named My Ride Dallas, has worked to increase communication and partnerships, track gaps in service throughout the county, and increase public awareness of transit. Partnerships created by My Ride Dallas have led to greater sharing of transit information with the Dallas 211 network, which assists people seeking transportation information. My Ride Dallas completed its partnership with DART for Mobility 101 courses, teaching residents of the area about the transit system. My Ride Dallas continues to refer individuals and agencies to DART’s mobility management team for training.

DART has also been implementing strategies from the 2013 plan. In 2017 DART launched a new My Ride North Texas online tool to increase online access to information about regional transit resources. This project was funded by the Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative (VTCLI) and

will provide the 16-county region with one-click access to public transportation information. DART also began a program to provide orientation and mobility training for visually impaired persons so that they can more confidently use the transit system. DART has continued to grow its transit ambassadors program, and has continued working to facilitate connections to all regional transit services.

Several partnerships involving DART have also contributed to transit progress in Dallas County. DART, along with FWTa and DCTA, partnered together to initiate the GoPass mobile ticketing app. STAR Transit partnered with DART to connect STAR Transit’s routes from Balch Springs, Seagoville, Mesquite, and Hutchins to DART light rail stations. DART has also started to plan and initiate pilot projects to improve service in parts of southern Dallas County. Pilot projects for Inland Port, Rylie, and Kleberg are planned to begin in March 2018.

DENTON COUNTY

Prioritized Strategies	Status
Establish and maintain a county coordinating committee to focus on ongoing transportation needs	Ongoing
Improve awareness of services by providing education and information, including travel training	Ongoing
Conduct additional planning activities to further quantify transportation needs of residents outside of the DCTA service area and define additional coordination opportunities for existing providers throughout the county	Ongoing
Enhance connections among existing services to improve access within the county	Ongoing
Establish or improve service to regional destinations, including employment centers and medical services in Dallas, Tarrant and Collin Counties	Ongoing
Provide additional service in unserved areas and to underserved locations	Ongoing

Additional Strategies	Status
Create partnerships between transit agencies, municipalities and community organizations to increase the accessibility of bus stops and paths to transit	Ongoing
Expand the availability and affordability of for-hire transportation (private transportation providers such as taxis) to increase options for travel	Ongoing

The Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) and Span, Inc. provide public transportation in Denton County. DCTA and Span staff meet on a regular basis to discuss coordination opportunities. Additionally, with the aim of improving access and providing education and information, DCTA and Span provide travel planning assistance to transit riders. Span’s mobility manager also helps to identify, plan for, and secure funding for additional services in underserved areas. Since 2013, Span entered into new or expanded service agreements to provide transportation in the cities of Flower Mound, Little Elm and

The Colony.

In regards to improving service to regional destinations, the North Texas Xpress bus service (which opened in 2016 and is operated jointly by DCTA and the Fort Worth Transportation Authority) connects Denton to Fort Worth, including a stop in the Alliance area. Access to Dallas County for jobs and medical services is accommodated by the A-train (a 21-mile regional rail system connecting Denton and Dallas Counties), with a transfer to DART’s rail and bus service in Carrollton.

DCTA applied for and received funding to enhance bus stop accessibility, and is working on those improvements. DCTA is also partnering with transportation network and taxi companies to supplement traditional transit services.

Another initiative taking place in Denton County is the Community Health Council hosted by Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital in Denton. Although this group is focused on health, it also has a transportation subcommittee.

ELLIS COUNTY

Prioritized Strategies	Status
Enhance existing transportation service, expand service hours or introduce new service within the county to better connect local communities	Partially implemented
Expand or introduce new transportation options that enable regional connections to Dallas for employment and medical services	Partially implemented
Improve public awareness of existing and new public transportation services, including raising awareness that services are not limited to older adults and individuals with disabilities	Partially implemented
Improve transportation options to access jobs within Ellis County, including employment locations in Waxahachie and Ennis	No progress reported
Explore local service to connect key destinations in Waxahachie, including uptown, downtown, the new Baylor Hospital (opening in 2014) and Navarro College	No progress reported
Additional Strategies	Status
Provide transportation to Veterans Affairs services in Dallas	Ongoing
Create language-specific marketing to reach individuals who have limited English proficiency	Partially implemented
Expand service availability for youth under age 18	Partially implemented
Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need	No progress reported
Evaluate different ways to provide public transportation services through partnerships with public and private transportation operators	No progress reported

Community Transit Services (CTS) provides public transportation in Ellis County. CTS extended its service hours to include Saturday service in January 2016. CTS has also received funding to update its website and make information about the transit service it provides more accessible.

Senior Connect contracted with STAR Transit to provide trips into Dallas for eligible Ellis county residents to medical appointments. Additionally, some transportation to Veterans Affairs services in Dallas is available for older adults and people with disabilities through the STAR Transit and Senior Connect partnership.

ERATH COUNTY

Prioritized Strategies	Status
Improve availability of connections from Stephenville and Dublin to regional destinations including medical services, job access and education	No progress reported
Create and maintain a county coordinating committee to focus on ongoing transportation needs	No progress reported
Decrease waiting times for public transportation from its current two-hour time window	No progress reported
Expand service operating hours beyond 8:00 am to 5:00 pm to address community and job access needs within Erath County	No progress reported

Additional Strategies	Status
Improve awareness of existing public transit services and expand opportunities for partnerships to grow transit service	Ongoing
Develop a driver recruitment and retention program to address difficulties CARR faces in hiring and retaining drivers in Erath County	No progress reported

City and Rural Rides (also known as CARR) provides public transportation in Erath County. CARR started a partnership with Tarleton State in 2014, providing free shuttle services to assist students and employees traveling between off-campus apartment complexes, remote parking lots and the university's Stephenville

campus. The program features a live tracking service to inform users of the shuttle's location and estimated arrival times, which can be accessed through its website (www.TarletonStateUniversityShuttle.com) or mobile app.

HOOD COUNTY & SOMERVELL COUNTY

Prioritized Strategies	Status
Increase service in Hood County and Somervell County to address access to all activities; identify funding sources	No progress reported
Meeting of a coordinating committee to discuss ongoing transportation needs	No progress reported

Additional Strategies	Status
Explore ways to make bus passes easier to use	Ongoing
Improve awareness of available public transportation services	No progress reported
Coordinate more efficient transportation routes for senior center access	No progress reported

The Transit System provides public transportation in Hood County and Somervell County. Currently, family passes enable the Transit System’s riders to pay

for trips with a pre-loaded fare card rather than cash, which makes bus passes easier to use.

HUNT COUNTY

Prioritized Strategies	Status
Establish a regional transportation link to the Dallas-Fort Worth area to allow for improved employment and medical access; enable connections with regional transportation services	Ongoing
Improve access to education in and around Hunt County through partnerships with colleges and universities; link education sites to community services and improve access for students living in rural areas	Under development
Create and maintain a county coordinating committee to focus on ongoing transportation needs	No progress reported

Additional Strategies	Status
Explore partnerships with faith organizations in the county to maximize use of existing transportation resources and coordinate the provision of transportation service	Ongoing
Coordinate with Veterans Affairs transportation programs to improve the availability of veterans transportation to Dallas and Bonham facilities	Ongoing
Improve local and county access through a reduced scheduling pickup window or through improved rider familiarity with service parameters to facilitate access to community services, medical services and jobs within Hunt County	Ongoing
Increase awareness of existing services through a countywide education initiative	Ongoing
Establish mobility management activities to build, grow and maintain partnerships focused on access to jobs, job training, and education in the county	Ongoing

The Connection (operated by Senior Center Resources and Public Transit) provides public transportation in Hunt County. To provide a regional transportation link to the Dallas-Fort Worth area, The Connection started service to Rowlett’s DART Station in the fall of 2016. The Connection also actively shares information about its services to communities, employers,

schools, and other agencies in Hunt County. The Connection also coordinates with Veterans Affairs on an as-needed basis to ensure that veterans can reach their appointments at various facilities. Additionally, The Connection is working on developing partnerships, actively training riders, and attending outreach events throughout Hunt County.

JOHNSON COUNTY

Prioritized Strategies	Status
Increase awareness by educating local officials on available transit services, local demand, opportunities to leverage funding and opportunities for economic development with transit	Ongoing
Explore opportunities to strengthen regional transportation links into Tarrant County to allow for improved education, employment and medical access	Ongoing
Establish and build partnerships with cities, employers and other stakeholders in the county; explore options for additional funding to grow transit service in the county	Under development
Create and maintain a county coordinating committee to focus on ongoing transportation needs	No progress reported
Coordinate with City/County Transit Advisory Board to further goals and objectives identified; establish collaborative methods of meeting performance measures and creating successful outcomes	No progress reported

Additional Strategies	Status
Coordinate with cities to incorporate transit into redevelopment and revitalization planning activities	Ongoing
Increase and improve access and availability of transit service along major east/west and north/south corridors throughout the county	Under development
Expand service during evenings and weekends to improve access to service sector jobs, recreation activities and medical facilities	No progress reported
Explore options for subsidized fares and affordable subscription services with City/County Transportation	No progress reported

City/County Transportation provides public transportation in Johnson County. Working to increase awareness, City/County Transportation offers presentations about its service upon request. City/County Transportation also connects to Fort Worth and FWTAs services through its existing commuter route. Coordination

with cities to incorporate transit into redevelopment and revitalization planning activities is conducted on an as-needed basis. City/County Transportation is exploring new partnerships, is considering selling advertising space on its buses for additional funding, and is exploring possible additional commuter connections.

KAUFMAN COUNTY

Prioritized Strategies	Status
Improve public awareness of existing and new public transportation services	Ongoing
Increase usage or modify service to address low ridership on STAR Transit’s Trolley in Kaufman	Ongoing
Increase options for local transportation within and between communities in Kaufman County for those with limited mobility, including older adults, individuals with disabilities and low-income individuals	Ongoing
Explore opportunities for regional connections that can address needs for commuter services connecting to major employment destinations in the region and needs for affordable and accessible transportation to medical services in the region, including Mesquite and Dallas	Ongoing
Improve access to local employment destinations in areas such as Kaufman, Terrell and Forney, focusing on options for low-income workers	Under development

Additional Strategies	Status
Improve the availability and affordability of transportation to Veterans Affairs services in Dallas	Ongoing
Maintain and improve transportation options for older adults throughout the county, including rural northeast and southern parts of the county	Ongoing

STAR Transit provides public transportation in Kaufman County. To improve public awareness of existing and new public transportation services, STAR Transit has updated its website and hired marketing personnel. STAR Transit has implemented recommendations from a 2015 planning study to increase the efficiency of the Kaufman Trolley, and its ridership continues to slowly increase. STAR Transit also continues to provide demand-response transportation throughout Kaufman County.

STAR Transit was recently awarded TxDOT funding to implement additional bus route services in Kaufman and Terrell. Routes are currently under development and key employment centers will be included. Lastly, Senior Connect contracts with STAR Transit to provide trips for seniors into Dallas for medical appointments, and the Dallas VA is one of their top destinations.

NAVARRO COUNTY

Prioritized Strategies	Status
Improve local and county access through increased service frequencies or hours of service to address community and job access needs and access to medical care within Navarro County	Ongoing
Regional transportation link to the Dallas-Fort Worth area that can allow for greater employment opportunities and connections with regional transportation services	No progress reported
Increase awareness of existing services through a countywide education initiative	No progress reported

Additional Strategies	Status
Establish a training program that will assist first time bus riders in learning how public transportation operates and how to schedule services	No progress reported
Create and maintain a county coordinating committee to focus on ongoing transportation needs	No progress reported

Community Transit Services (CTS) provides public transportation in Navarro County. CTS extended its hours to include Saturday service in January 2016. Senior Connect partnered with STAR Transit to offer trips for seniors and individuals with disabilities that need to access medical appointments in Dallas County.

PALO PINTO COUNTY

Prioritized Strategies	Status
Expand local and regional job access	Under development
Identify connections to regional transit services and improve access to destinations outside the county including Weatherford and Tarrant County	Under development
Increase awareness of available public transportation services and partnership opportunities	No progress reported
Increase outreach and education about transit services for transportation disadvantaged populations in the county, especially in the southwest corner	No progress reported
Additional Strategies	Status
Acquire vehicles to better match vehicle size to type of service provided in order to more effectively use resources by using smaller vehicles for transporting one or two riders at a time	Ongoing
Improve the customer experience and ability to partner with funding agencies, including fare card improvements	No progress reported
Create and maintain a county coordinating committee to focus on ongoing transportation needs	No progress reported

Public Transit Services (PTS) provides public transportation in Palo Pinto County. Weekday commuter service is provided by PTS from Mineral Wells to Fort Worth. A 2015 planning study made recommendations for local and regional job access, as well as for regional connections to Tarrant County: no new services have been added to date. PTS participated in a cooperative vehicle procurement coordinated by the

North Central Texas Council of Governments, where three different types of vehicles were acquired including smaller transit vehicles. Lastly, Easter Seals (a nonprofit organization serving North Texas) conducted Mobility 101 training in 2015 and 2016 in Palo Pinto County, covering transit resources available in the whole County. Public Transit Services (PTS) remains open to partnership opportunities.

PARKER COUNTY

Prioritized Strategies	Status
Identify and serve regional connections to Tarrant County and Wise County	Under development
Coordinate existing services in the northeast Parker County and Azle area	No progress reported
Create and maintain a county coordinating committee to focus on ongoing transportation needs	No progress reported
Grow service in the northeast corner of the county including Springtown (coordinate with existing providers)	Under development
Pilot program of fixed route or trolley service in areas with potentially high ridership	Under development
Additional Strategies	Status
Acquire vehicles to better match vehicle size to type of service provided and evaluate the need for every vehicle in a provider's fleet to be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible	Ongoing
Develop centralized access to information about public transportation options in the county and surrounding area through a one call or one click project coordinated among regional partners	Under development

Public Transit Services (PTS) provides public transportation in Parker County. Weekday commuter service is provided by PTS from Weatherford to Fort Worth. The Parker County Committee on Aging also provides some transportation to older adults in Parker County. In regards to growing service in the northeast corner of Parker County and developing a pilot fixed route service, a 2015 planning study made recommendations for transit service in Springtown and for fixed route service, although no new routes are operating to date.

PTS participated in a cooperative vehicle procurement coordinated by the North Central Texas Council of Governments, where three different types of ADA accessible vehicles were acquired. Lastly, to provide centralized access to information about public transportation options, DART (which provides transit service mainly in Dallas County and surrounding areas) is leading a one-call one-click project for the 16-county North Central Texas region and is coordinating with regional partners in order to complete it.

ROCKWALL COUNTY

Prioritized Strategies	Status
Improve public awareness of existing and new public transportation services	Ongoing
Increase transportation options for seniors, low-income residents and people with disabilities, including increased daytime, evening and weekend service to improve access to community destinations	Ongoing
Identify, plan for and provide transportation options for access to regional employment opportunities	Ongoing
Additional Strategies	Status
Explore needs for transportation service to identified employment clusters within Rockwall County	Ongoing
Improve the condition and availability of sidewalks and crosswalks in order to facilitate access to transit	Ongoing
Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need	No progress reported

STAR Transit provides public transportation in Rockwall County. To improve public awareness of existing and new public transportation services, STAR Transit has updated its website and hired marketing personnel. STAR Transit continues to provide demand response transportation in Rockwall County, and services includes access to employment within its service area, including the cities of Mesquite, Balch Springs,

and Seagoville. Additionally, Senior Connect contracts with STAR Transit to provide trips for seniors into Dallas for medical appointments.

In regards to improving the condition and availability of sidewalks and crosswalks in order to facilitate access to transit, the City of Rockwall's downtown capital improvement project (completed in 2015) includes sidewalks and increased accessibility.

TARRANT COUNTY

Prioritized Strategies	Status
Improve coordination among transportation providers that serve transit-dependent populations in similar geographies	Under development
Coordinate ongoing efforts to establish and expand a one-call center for transportation options	Ongoing
Address gaps in service due to eligibility	Under development
Establish or enhance transportation service in geographies with limited or no transportation options including outlying areas of the county such as White Settlement, Lakeside, Lake Worth and Haslet as well as the Alliance area and dialysis centers	Ongoing
Expand the availability of transportation options in the early morning, in the evening and on weekends	Ongoing
Expand employment transportation for low-income individuals without transportation options	Ongoing
Establish service for veterans without transportation options to facilitate access to Veterans Affairs locations and community services	Ongoing
Increase public awareness of new and enhanced transportation services, including enhanced outreach to individuals with limited English proficiency	Ongoing

Additional Strategies	Status
Improve availability of transportation options during peak hours when services are constrained by high levels of demand	Under development
Explore additional specialized services to serve the needs of students, homeless persons and non-English speaking persons	Under development
Explore opportunities for public/private partnerships as a way to address gaps in service	Under development
Additional strategies that address needs identified in the planning process will be considered between this plan and a future plan update	Under development

The Fort Worth Transportation Authority (FWTA, previously referred to as “The T”), is the main transportation provider in Tarrant County. FWTA, in partnership with DCTA, operates bus service that connects downtown Fort Worth with Denton with a stop in Alliance.

My Ride Tarrant is a project of MHMR of Tarrant County that focuses on connecting Tarrant County residents to transportation resources and providers. This group meets quarterly with My Ride Dallas to discuss local and regional transportation challenges. Both of these projects support DART’s My Ride North Texas online tool to assist with identifying appropriate regional transit resources. DART’s project was funded by the Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative (VTCLI) and will provide the 16-county region with one-click access to public transportation information.

The Tarrant Riders Network (TRN) is a committee formed to improve transit in the county. The group holds regular meetings to discuss and strategize for better transit for the transit dependent and areas with

service gaps, and provides public awareness for transit in the county and outreach to those with limited English proficiency.

FWTA has been active in implementing strategies from the 2013 Access North Texas plan. Upon completion of the 2015 Master Plan, FWTA has implemented new service in the Fort Worth area. FWTA also partnered with Easter Seals North Texas to implement the ReadyVetGo initiative to move veterans to and from doctor’s appointments at Veterans Affairs clinics in the county.

The city of Arlington partnered with DART and FWTA to operate the Arlington MAX transit route. This pilot bus route connected the University of Texas-Arlington to the Trinity Railway Express (TRE) CentrePort Station. While the route ended in 2017, it was replaced by a microtransit shared-ride service (multiple riders sharing van trips dynamically created based on demand). This ride-sharing service, operated by Via, launched in late 2017 and continues to connect Arlington to the TRE CentrePort Station.

WISE COUNTY

Prioritized Strategies	Status
Establish connections to regional transit services in Denton County and Tarrant County	No progress reported
Improve public awareness and visibility of available service	No progress reported
Establish and maintain a county coordinating committee to focus on ongoing transportation needs	No progress reported
Improve medical access	No progress reported
Increase evening and weekend service	No progress reported

Additional Strategies	Status
Establish consistent and effective driver recruitment and retention programs for public transportation services to address difficulties in retaining drivers for vehicles in Wise County	No progress reported
Provide travel training for older adults or individuals with disabilities to learn how to use public transportation	No progress reported

Texoma Area Paratransit System (TAPS) provides public transportation in Wise County. TAPS downsized in 2015, which affected many of the strategies for Wise County. Although TAPS operated the Commuter Connect route between Decatur, Rhome, and downtown Fort Worth in 2015, this service was cut due to low ridership.

DALLAS/FORT WORTH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Prioritized Strategies	Status
Explore feeder transit service from cities with significant populations of airport employees, including Grapevine, Southlake, Colleyville, Bedford and Euless, to facilitate access to airport employment	Under development
Explore partnerships for site-specific shuttles to serve major employers and institutions in and around the airport and to connect these destinations to rail stations or transit centers	Ongoing
Implement parking policies at transit stations that assess prices by 24-hour periods to encourage transit use by employees who work shifts that span two calendar days	No progress reported
Maintain a last-mile connection between DFW Airport and CentrePort Station on the TRE line and establish a new connection to Southgate Plaza when compete to serve employees	Ongoing
Encourage employees to use transit through enhanced transit information and through discounted passes, including options such as an employee transit pass subsidy, deeply discounted passes provided through an employer or allowing employees to purchase passes with pre-tax dollars	Ongoing

Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFWIA) has made strides to improve transit access to and from the airport. Since the Access North Texas 2013 plan, DFWIA has made it easier for private transportation network companies such as Uber and Lyft to provide ground connections for those going to or leaving from

the airport. The airport continues the CentrePort shuttle that provides connects the TRE to the airport, which benefits travelers and employees alike. DART has partnered with the airport to provide a reduced fare for employees taking the Orange Line to get to work.

APPENDIX B.2

SUMMARY OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY POPULATION

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) is a measure of people age 5 years and older who speak English “less than well,” based on Census responses. For Access North Texas, this measure covers the 16-county region represented by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). The data used in this analysis is the 2010-2015 US Census American Community Survey estimates. Understanding the number of people with LEP, and the primary language these people speak allows transit agencies to better understand communication needs of its passengers.

In the region, an estimated 843,064 people have limited English proficiency. The top three languages

spoken after English are Spanish or Spanish Creole, Vietnamese, and Korean. Spanish or Spanish Creole speakers make up 81% of the LEP population, approximately 685,000 people. The second most popular language is Vietnamese, with 4.9% of the total LEP population, approximately 41,000 people. Korean is the third most popular language with 1.7% of the total LEP population, approximately 14,000 people.

These populations vary quite a bit between counties and cities. Transit providers may use more detailed, localized data to ensure that local LEP populations have access to information about public transportation and can use transit services as needed.

Language of Limited English Proficiency	Individuals	Percent of Total LEP Population
All Languages	843,064	100.0%
Spanish or Spanish Creole	685,200	81.3%
Vietnamese	41,272	4.9%
Korean	14,195	1.7%
Other Asian Languages	13,606	1.6%
African Languages	12,186	1.4%
Other Indic Languages	10,211	1.2%
Arabic	8,601	1.0%
Hindi	6,384	0.8%
Persian	5,282	0.6%

Language of Limited English Proficiency	Individuals	Percent of Total LEP Population
Urdu	5,252	0.6%
French	5,035	0.6%
Tagalog	4,834	0.6%
Laotian	3,335	0.4%
Russian	2,831	0.3%
Gujarati	2,814	0.3%
Chinese	2,243	0.3%
Portuguese or Portuguese Creole	2,225	0.3%
Mon-Khmer, Cambodian	2,142	0.3%
Japanese	2,060	0.2%
Other Pacific Island Languages	2,026	0.2%
Other Indo-European Languages	1,923	0.2%
Thai	1,867	0.2%
German	1,773	0.2%
Serbo-Croatian	1,354	0.2%
Italian	733	0.1%
Polish	710	0.1%
Other Slavic Languages	668	0.1%
French Creole	296	
Hebrew	272	
Other West Germanic Languages	263	
Armenian	263	
Greek	240	
Hungarian	234	
Hmong	215	
Other and Unspecified Languages	196	
Scandinavian Languages	191	
Other Native North American Languages	69	
Navajo	39	
Yiddish	24	

*PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
TOOLBOX*

APPENDIX B.4

PRIVATE CARRIER LIST

Below is a list of private providers operating in the North Central Texas 16-county region, organized by type of private provider. These private transportation providers are additional transportation options. Providers set their own fares and have varying capabilities to serve clients with mobility devices.

Type of Service	Private Provider
Car Sharing	Zipcar
Charter Bus	Buses by Bill Dan Dipert Echo Transportation Kerrville Bus Company
Demand Response	AET Custom Shuttle Apple Care & Companion Barry Berger Transportation Service Bec N Call Blessed Hands Elderly Care & Transportation Services Bucketlisters Children's Transportation Associations Comfort Keepers Dallas Wheelchair Transport Graci & Merci Transportation Health Services of North Texas Healthy Motives Delivery & Transportation Services Home Helpers Transportation & In-Home Care Services JOSHUA Transportation Logisticare Med Ride Now Non Emergency Transport Inc. Ride N' Safe Mobility Transports, LLC

Type of Service	Private Provider
Demand Response, cont.	Senior Care Transportation Services Senior Rides Vision of Valley We Care Senior Services
Fixed Route Local Transit	Arlington Trolley Amtrak El Expreso
Intercity Bus / Rail	Greyhound Megabus Tornado
Limousine	365 Limo Transportation, LLC A 2 Z Limos A Transport Associates Accent/Johnston Limousine, Inc. Aircar, Inc. AJL International Allen Executive Transportation ALOO DFW ALT Worldwide Chauffeured Services Big Town Limousine Service Business Exec Sedan & Limousine Service Carey Dallas/Fort Worth ECS Limo Execucar Executive Limo, LLC Four-S-Limo France Limousine Company, Inc. G & G Executive Transportation, Inc. Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center-Limo Iben Limousine Services, LLC Silver West Limousines Smith Limousine Wynne Transportation

Type of Service	Private Provider
Shuttle	Aries Shuttle Super Shuttle A's Shuttle GO Yellow Checker Shuttle
Taxi	Alamo Cab Co. Ambassador Cab Co. Cowboy Cab / Ranger Cab Dallas Taxi Executive Taxi Service / Golden Cab Company / Taxi Dallas Great American Cab Co. King Cab Company On-the-Dot Taxi Star Cab Co. Texas Cab Co. United Cab Co. Yellow Cab / Irving Holdings Eagle Cab Company (now part of Yellow Cab) Jet Taxi
Taxi Operators Association	Association of Taxicab Operators Independent Taxi Operators Association
Transportation Network Company (TNC)	Bubbl Lyft Uber Wingz

*TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY
IMPROVEMENT TOOL*

TRANSPORTATION POLL