ACCESS NORTH TEXAS

Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan for North Central Texas

ACCESS NORTH TEXAS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the importance of providing individuals access to transportation services has become crucial as our region becomes more interconnected and individuals need to travel across city and county lines to meet daily needs. The cost of these longer trips has increased the need for more affordable services for those with fixed incomes to ensure they can access food, jobs, critical services, and educational resources that may not be available within their local communities. As population and job opportunities grow across the region and seniors decide to age in place, there is a greater need to coordinate the delivery and efficiency of transportation services.

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). The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires a coordinated public transit-human services transportation coordination plan be developed through a local process that includes participation by seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and other members of the public. The plan was first adopted in 2013 and is updated every four to five years. It provides a framework to assist stakeholders in improving public transportation across the region by identifying the transportation needs of seniors, 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.

Seniors, 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 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 analysis, and bringing that knowledge together to create a plan for the region.

PLAN REQUIREMENTS

It is required federal transit law and for a coordinated public transit-human services plan to be "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" utilizing transportation services. 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, 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
Currently a coordinated public transit-human services plan is stipulated in the Federal Transit Administration's Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities

Program. 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). Most recently, it was also required in the FAST Act, the previous federal surface transportation legislation.

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.

Federal guidance for other transit funding, such as new or continuing job access and reverse commute projects under the Urbanized Area Formula (Section 5307) Program, 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.

PROGRESS SINCE 2018

Access North Texas was first adopted in 2013 and updated in 2018. Significant progress has been made in implementing the recommendations from that plan. Examples of outcomes since the 2018 plan update are described below. See Appendix A, Access North Texas (2018): Summary and Status, for more information about which strategies have been accomplished since the plan was adopted.

Expansion of Micro-Transit Services

The City of Arlington began a small pilot service to use Via Rideshare services around the Entertainment District and has since had multiple updates to expand the service, now covering the entire city. Trips are booked through an on-demand app and drivers will pick-up in a nearby location. In 2021, the Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) voted to introduce GoZone, an on-demand service with Via Rideshare, to meet the transportation needs of individuals in Denton, Lewisville, and Highland Village. The transition to GoZone aims to provide riders with safe, convenient, accessible, and affordable rides while extending service to areas that previously had limited access to fixed route bus service. The City of Grand Prairie also introduced on-demand services using the Via Rideshare platform in April 2022. Residents can use the new service Monday through Saturday to travel within city limits and to select college campuses.

Technology Innovation

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) initially launched the GoPass application through a Mobility on Demand Sandbox demonstration grant from the Federal Transit Administration. The app was developed to be an easy-to-use portal for riders to purchase transit tickets and view route

schedules from their phones. Recently, DART has been coordinating with other regional transportation providers such as Trinity Metro and STAR Transit to license and expand the use of application. Additionally, in March of 2022 the City of Arlington introduced their RAPID pilot service in Downtown Arlington and on the campus of University of Texas Arlington. This project supports the city's on-demand Via service by utilizing autonomous vehicles with a trained fleet attendant on board to provide an opportunity to explore potential uses of innovated technologies as part of a broader public transportation strategy.

Transit Programs for Low-Income Individuals & Job Seekers

In 2020, DART and Trinity Metro introduced programs to make transit fares more affordable for riders. DART's Discount GoPass® Tap Card program allows riders to take DART bus and/or trains for half the regularly priced fares and the system will automatically monitor and cap daily and monthly fares for the riders. To be eligible, riders would need to provide proof of participation in any of the qualifying assistance programs. In response to the job losses at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Trinity Metro began providing free rides for job seekers to connect them to job fairs, interviews, or other employment opportunities. Free rides were offered on all buses, trains, ACCESS and ZIPZONE services in Tarrant County with nearly 40,000 trips being provided in the first year of the program.

My Ride North Texas 2.0

As part of the Federal Transit Administration's Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility (ICAM) 2018 Pilot Program Grant, the North Central Texas Council of Governments was awarded funding to implement My Ride North Texas 2.0, a regional mobility management program to improve the coordination of

transportation services and expand travel navigation.

Partners implemented a regional 1800 line for residents to reach travel navigators who can provide transit information for their area. As part of a broader coordination strategy, the North Central Texas Council of Governments has been hosting quarterly regional mobility managers meetings to discuss transit issues and connect partners across the 16-county region.

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 and replace older vehicles to provide quality and reliable services to riders. To promote economies of scale that could benefit smaller transit providers, NCTCOG began a cooperative vehicle procurement in 2020 to obtain 80 vehicles for 5 regional 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.

CURRENT TRENDS

Since the last 2018 plan update, the region has experienced a rise in on-demand microtransit services and Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), such as Uber and Lyft, providing last-mile connections to supplement bus and rail services. This made it possible for transit agencies to introduce flexible solutions and center discussions on how to provide multi-modal transportation tailored to specific community needs. It also allowed agencies to pilot transit services in areas that previously had no or limited access to public transportation.

Additionally, to meet the transit needs and challenges of a growing region the largest three transit providers all examined their bus networks and voted to implement service changes that improve the customer experience and ensure riders have safe and easy access to food, jobs, critical services, and educational resources within their service areas. Both DART and Trinity Metro evaluated all their routes and rail services, and with community input, approved networks that provide riders with greater frequency, extended service hours, and improved access to destinations with expanded microtransit zones. DCTA underwent a two-year process to explore new options and decided to launch a new GoZone on-demand rideshare service to cover their service area with the goals of providing more coverage and longer service hours than their previous network. After much consideration, all three agencies approved redesigning their services and were able to incorporate microtransit solutions to connect riders within their service areas.

Starting in 2020 transit providers, much like the rest of the world, had to adapt to the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. From transit rides to meal deliveries, public transportation providers were at the forefront of keeping riders and operators safe. Many of the agencies shifted their services and updated their operating processes to ensure they could keep their doors open for essential workers and transit-dependent populations. At the beginning of the pandemic DART partnered with the Dallas Independent School District to deliver meals to affected families and used their vehicles and drivers to connect North Texas residents to needed services and meals. Trinity Metro and other agencies temporarily implemented free fares on routes to further reduce contact and encourage physical distance between operators and customers. All transit providers have since installed protective equipment on buses and

increased cleaning procedures to ensure both drivers and riders can enjoy rides safely. Also, with rider demand decreasing during the pandemic the transit providers are finding ways to adjust their service using smaller vehicles and expanding microtransit options in areas with lower transit demand.

METHODOLOGY OF CURRENT NEEDS

Outreach Efforts

Members of the public including seniors, people with disabilities, individuals with lower incomes, and representatives of local government, transit agencies, workforce agencies, and educational institutions were invited to participate in outreach meetings across the region. Meetings were held in Spring and Summer of 2021 and due to the COVID-19 pandemic the meetings were hosted virtually through different platforms. In total,

28 virtual outreach meetings were held with over 1,450 stakeholders being invited across the 16-county region. Nearly 85 participants attended the virtual meetings to share their thoughts on public transportation needs. In addition, staff followed up with stakeholders representing local governments and transit dependent populations to gain a deeper understanding of the needs and to prepare strategies that can address those needs.

Invitations to the outreach meetings were emailed to stakeholders in each county. Meeting announcements and information were also posted online, promoted through social media and press releases, and information was shared with partner organizations to help increase visibility about the meetings through existing networks. During the outreach meetings, staff gave a brief welcome and introduction to Access North Texas. Following this, staff facilitated questions to prompt discussion

Regional Distribution of Access North Texas Public Survey Responses
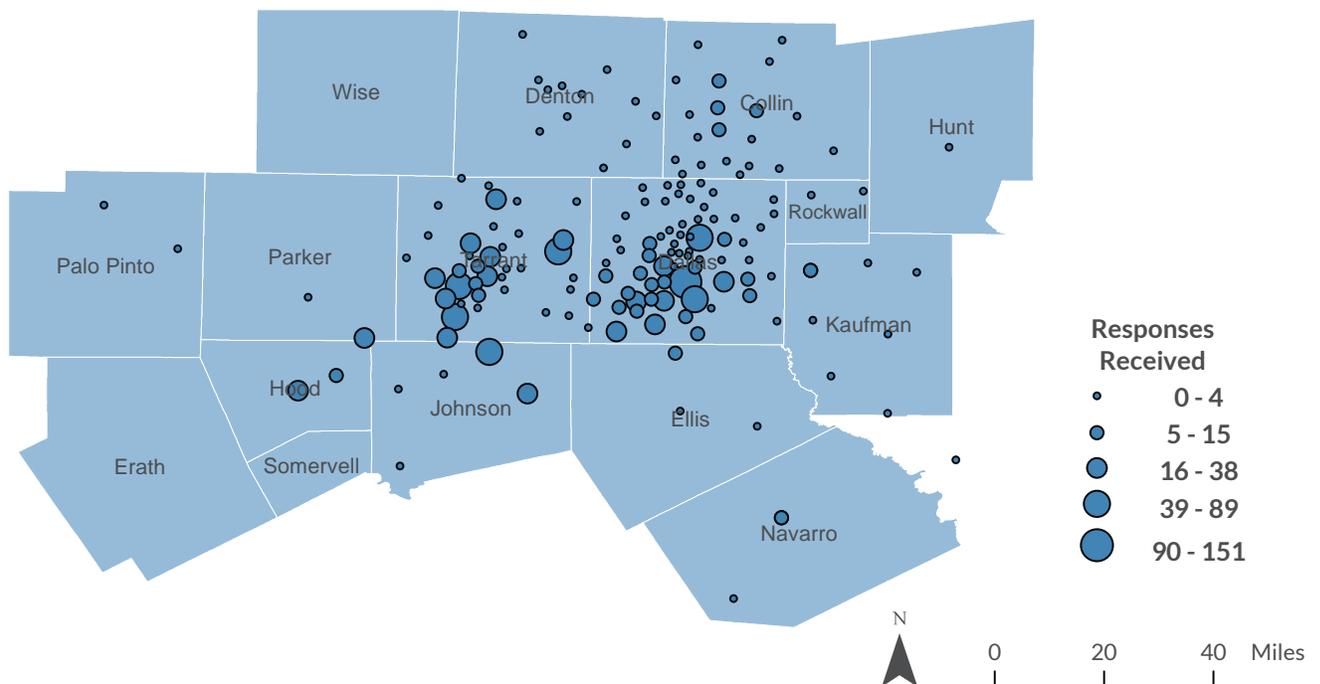
of transportation issues unique to each county. Through this discussion, community members and transit providers provided feedback on transportation issues within each county to help inform goals and strategies in this plan.

A transportation survey in English and Spanish was also available online and paper copies were shared via community partners. The survey collected first-hand data about public transportation in the region from both riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations. Questions completed by individuals reveal personal experiences with public transportation, while those completed by organizations on behalf of their clients illuminate issues seen by client advocates. Both forms of the survey provide personal views of public transportation environment in the region. A total of 1,522 surveys were completed, with 1,220 as a direct result of outreach and coordination efforts from community partners. Information collected through the survey informed both regional goals and county strategies. The distribution of survey responses can be seen in the map below.

Data Sources

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

TAIT Tool/Environmental Justice

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. The populations included in this tool are adults 65 and over, individuals with disabilities, individuals with lower incomes, and households without cars. The shaded colors indicate when one or more variables are present. The TAIT data is explored in detail in each county's chapter following this Executive Summary.

VARIABLE	REGIONAL PERCENTAGE
Adults 65 and Over	11.1%
Individuals with Disabilities	9.5%
Individuals Below Poverty	16%
Zero Car Households	1.6%

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

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, temporally, or for certain populations. This information helped frame discussions at outreach meetings and

Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) 16-County Region
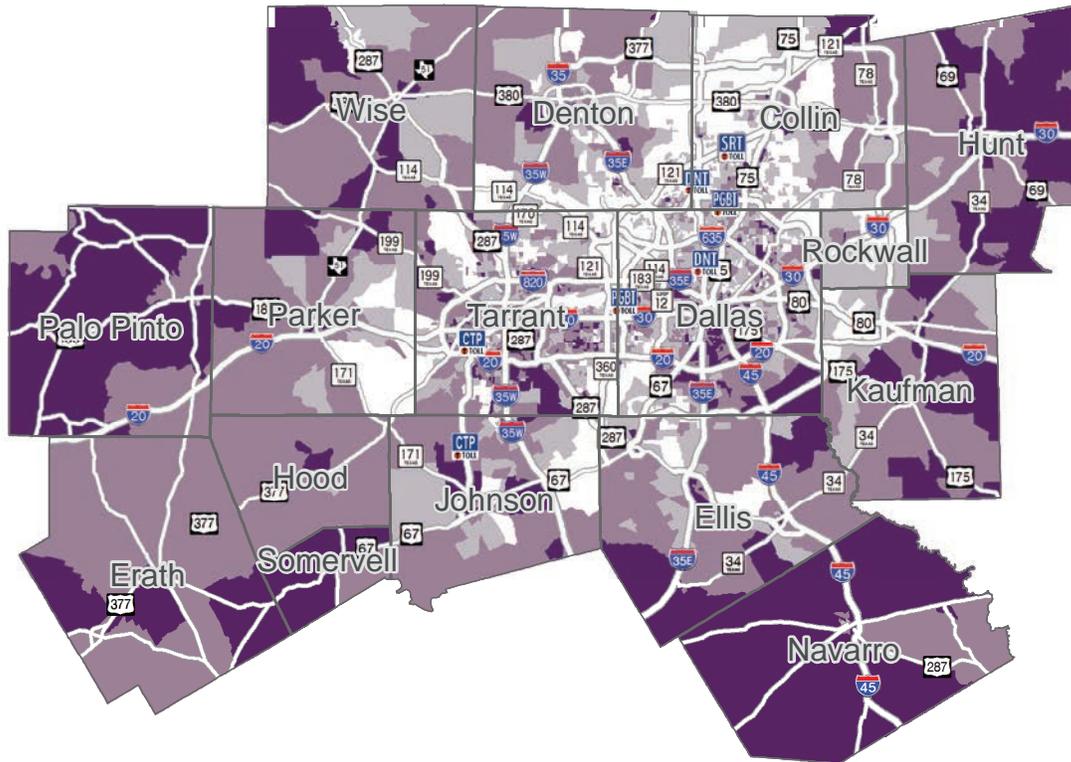
Legend

All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage

One Variable Above Regional Percentage

Two Variables Above Regional Percentage

All Variables Above Regional Percentage

0   25   50 Miles

N

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening 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.

conversations with stakeholders and influenced the final goals for the region as well as strategies for each county.

Analysis and Synthesis

In preparation for each outreach meeting staff researched local transit conditions such as available public transportation options and locally prepared plans by agencies and municipalities. Information was shared with stakeholders in each meeting to provide context for each county and help identify gaps in service.

Once all outreach meetings were completed and the survey period closed, the information gathered from Spring and Summer 2021 was sorted by the 16-counties covered by the Access North Texas plan. Open-ended responses to the survey and comments from participants were compiled into county-specific lists along with transit-specific information from the Map Your Experience tool and stakeholder meetings. Identifying details were excluded from the list to ensure respondents could stay confidential.

NCTCOG staff then analyzed the qualitative data using content analysis. A coding key was created to standardize categorization of data for purposes of analysis. This resulted in the following 6 themes: rider barriers, types of missed trips, desired modes, transit enhancements, locations, and miscellaneous. Data was coded independently and the staff analyzing the data met to establish consensus and confirm overall themes and sub-themes. Afterwards, the information was compiled into county-specific data summaries that also included demographic statistics from the U.S. Census 5-year 2019 American Community Survey.

Development of Goals and Strategies

Utilizing the data packages and themes identified in the coding process, information for each county was reviewed to highlight major issues and analyze patterns occurring within each county and across the region. The issues and challenges were categorized into similar groups to create the 5 regional goals listed in the RECOMMENDATIONS section. Regional efforts and actions over the next four years to improve public transportation for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income populations across the 16-county region may be prioritized under these goals.

Within each of these defined goals, similar priorities were combined and rephrased to draft strategies that can be used across various counties. The strategies aim to provide more specific guidance on how goals could be implemented to address challenges and issues. For each county or group of counties, strategies under each goal were prioritized based on feedback received from outreach meetings, survey responses, and stakeholder discussions.

Also, public transportation short- and long-term studies prepared by NCTCOG were reviewed to ensure goals and strategies in Access North Texas were consistent and aligned with those recommendations. Access North Texas stakeholders and public transportation providers also had an opportunity to review draft goals and strategies to provide any initial comments or feedback.

Future progress on goals listed in Access North Texas will be measured by the types of projects implemented under the listed strategies and how they align with the priorities outlined in each chapter. These goals and strategies will also be used to evaluate projects under NCTCOG's Transit Strategic Partnership Program.

Proposed 2022 Access North Texas Goals & Strategies

GOAL	STRATEGIES
Plan and Develop Transportation Options by Assessing Community Need and Challenges	A) Conduct planning activities to further identify public transportation needs of residents outside of existing transportation authorities and define additional coordination opportunities for existing providers B) Develop potential connections from commuter bus lines to light rail service C) Invest in programs to assist with filling gaps in public transportation and facilitate service for work-related trips D) Invest in programs that facilitate transportation trips to medical and healthcare appointments E) Launch a mobility toolbox to educate on and promote public transportation options such as fixed route, demand-respond, on-demand services, etc
Implement Services by Enhancing Transportation Options and Expanding Where Service Gaps Exist	A) Improve existing public transportation options to better fit the needs of riders and households with 1 or zero cars by increasing service frequency and availability B) Expand eligible trips for specialized public transportation services to include employment, social, religious, and well-being trips C) Increase access to employment, social (such as entertainment and shopping centers), religious, and well-being trips in areas with limited to no public transportation service D) Establish additional assistance or more specialized public transportation options for customers who are not ADA paratransit eligible or physically capable of utilizing regular public transportation services E) Expand service hours to support needs of low-income individuals in the service industry and outside traditional 9am-5pm jobs F) Expand public transportation services to key destinations throughout the region without comprehensive service and support regional integration of new services.

GOAL	STRATEGIES
Coordinate with Transportation Providers, Public Agencies, and Stakeholders to Increase Efficiencies	A) Improve coordination among public transit providers and cities that lack public transportation B) Work with regional and local organizations to increase ease of travel across municipal and county boundaries C) Foster cooperation between public transit providers within counties to allow better connectivity and simplify regional trips D) Develop partnerships across transportation providers to improve access to trips in the evening and weekends E) Create and support partnerships between public transit providers and local organizations to increase opportunities to make fares more affordable for those in need F) Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate, non-traditional ways to deliver and support public transportation, including but not limited to partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, transportation network companies, shared use mobility programs, and volunteer drivers
Support Public Transportation Recovery and Growth	A) Promote safe and healthy practices on public transportation services B) Implement plans to safely return to shared mobility options so that vehicles can carry multiple riders in one trip C) Explore sources of local revenue for public transportation through partnerships, sponsorships, and contracting for service D) Advocate to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase availability of affordable public transportation options E) Partner with organizations to coordinate training and recruitment for future public transportation professionals and create pipelines with area schools F) Establish driver recruitment and retention programs for public transportation services to address difficulties in retaining drivers
Promote Access and Information about Available Transportation Options	A) Enhance communication and outreach programs to improve awareness of existing or new transportation options B) Conduct travel training to educate the public on available services and policies C) Partner with agencies, recreation centers, senior residencies, housing assisted living centers, and other organizations to publicize information D) Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transportation through leadership, policy, or funding initiatives

RECOMMENDATIONS

The regional goals below identify and prioritize ways to address public transportation needs across the 16-county region. In addition to the regional strategies listed below, 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 transportation providers, stakeholder agencies, communities, and counties. NCTCOG staff are 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) has regular calls for projects and NCTCOG has a Transit Strategic Partnership Program for awarding federal funds to projects supporting the strategies listed in this plan.

Characteristics of a highly competitive project:

- Is a multi-year proposal where a three-year request is recommended for projects providing transit service;
- Identifies an existing public transit provider or existing non-profit transportation provider as the implementing agency when proposing to provide transit service;
- Targets individuals with lower incomes for project requests under the Job Access/Reverse Commute funds;
- Targets seniors 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 document the public transportation needs for seniors, 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 existing services, research conducted and collected, the public outreach meetings, the transportation poll used to collect individualized input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Collin County.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES.

Collin County is supported by several different transit providers and services. DART operates bus, rail, and GoLink microtransit services in the southwest portion of the county. DART fixed route bus and rail operates 7 days a week between 5:00 a.m. and 12:00 a.m. Schedules for each individual route vary. Single ride fares for DART buses start at $2.50, $1.25 reduced. Day passes, midday passes, a.m./p.m. passes, and 31-day passes are available for use on DART buses and rail. A local day pass is $6.00, $3.00 reduced. Regional day passes are also available for $12.00 and include TRE service West of CentrePort Station, Trinity Metro service, and DCTA service. DART GoLink zones in Collin County operate from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, with Saturday service available in some zones. GoLink one-way fares are available for $2.50, $1.25 reduced, and can only be purchased on the GoPass app or using the GoPass Tap Card. Cash can be added to the GoPass Tap Card in person at several retail locations such as participating 7-Eleven stores.

Local and regional multi-trip passes can also be used for GoLink but only through contactless payment. GoLink vehicles does not accept cash fares, paper passes or vouchers.

DART also operates Collin County Rides for qualified residents of Wylie, Allen and Fairview that are age 65 or over or have a certified disability. Registered residents may travel anywhere within Collin County. Travel may include connecting to or traveling within the DART service area for any purpose as long as the origin or destination of the trip is within the resident's city. The program operates from approximately 5:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. Monday through Saturday and 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. on Sundays and holidays. Fares are calculated at the time of scheduling a trip and trip cost will be given at the time of booking. Once approved for the program, riders may purchase fare funds for their subsidy wallet at a 75% discount. For instance, for a value of $500 to be added to the wallet riders must pay just $125. Riders are not able to book a trip if the calculated trip fees exceed the available wallet balance. There is an additional $2 fee for each additional passenger or personal care attendant. These are paid at the time of scheduling and are included in the total trip cost.

DART operates an additional service known as Collin County Transit. This service provides on-demand shared rides to qualifying riders from McKinney, Melissa, Celina, Lowry Crossing, Princeton and Prosper. In addition to the residency requirements, riders must be low-income, 65 years of age or older, or have a qualifying disability. Fares are $3 for travel between participating service area cities or $5 for travel to/from service area cities and Collin County. The service is operated Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

In the City of Frisco, DCTA operates curb-to-curb demand response transit service to eligible Frisco residents for trips within the City of Frisco and designated portions of Plano. Riders must be Frisco residents who are 65 years of age or older, disabled, or who require transportation for medical-care related purposes. The service is operated Monday through Friday 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Fares for trips traveling within Frisco are $3 while fares for trips traveling outside Frisco are $5.

The City of Richardson offers transportation service to Richardson residents aged 50 and over. The City's van service operates Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Service is provided anywhere within the city limits of Richardson for 25 cents each way or 50 cents round trip. Similarly, the City of Sachse offers a demand response transportation option to senior residents. Rides are provided to senior centers and appointments within the city limits. Daily drop off and pick-up fees are $0.50 one way or $1.00 round trip.

In addition to other transportation options and services, the Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) operates a commuter vanpool program within the North Central Texas region. As of May 2022, DCTA operated up to 21 vanpools with origins in Collin County and 3 vanpools as destinations in Collin County. Trinity Metro, another transit agency within the region, also operated 1 vanpool with a destination in Collin County. The number of vanpools may change month to month as the regional program expands shared commuter transportation opportunities.

With such a complex network of services available to riders in Collin County, assistance is often needed navigating what's available. My Ride North Texas 2.0 is a regional mobility management program to improve the coordination of transportation services and expand travel

Collin County Persons with Disabilities
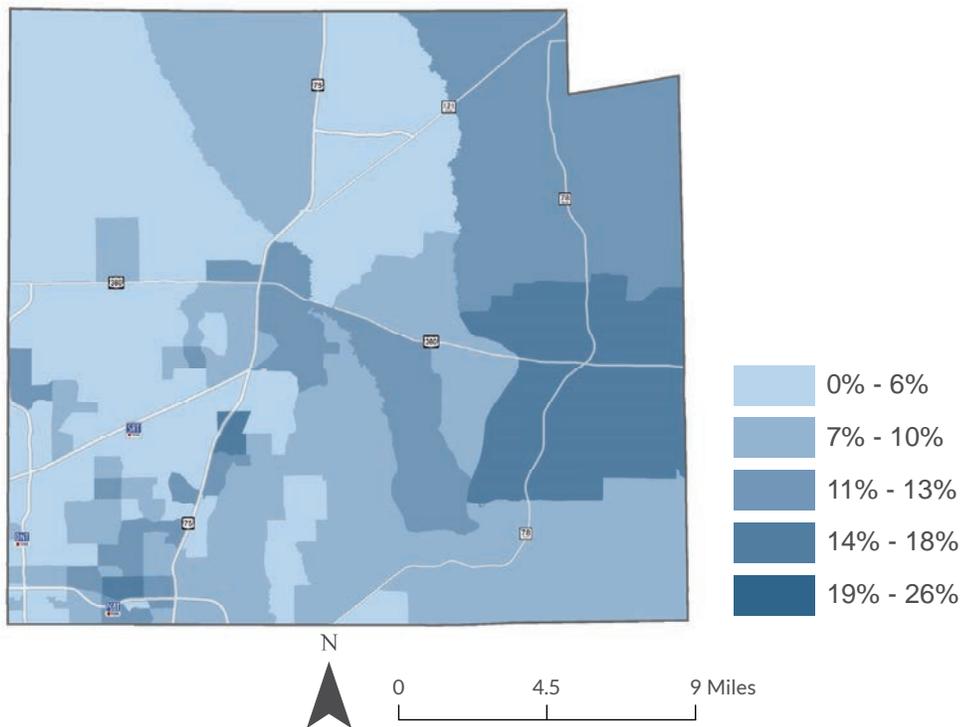
0% - 6%
7% - 10%
11% - 13%
14% - 18%
19% - 26%

N

0   4.5   9 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census tract level

navigation. The program is operated through partnerships between the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), Community Council of Greater Dallas, and My Health My Resources Tarrant County. My Ride North Texas serves all residents of North Central Texas but strives to connect aging populations and individuals with disabilities to transportation services and inform regional medical trips through public transit. In addition to direct assistance from travel navigators, the program offers the Get-A-Ride-Guide as a resource which provides information on various transportation resources throughout the North Central Texas region.

Finally, see Appendix B 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). Organizations can also contract with them to provide specific service for clients.

Naturally, gaps in service still exist in Collin County due to a variety of factors. At least one study has been developed to address this. In 2021, NCTCOG completed the Collin County Transit Study. The purpose of the study was to develop a comprehensive public transportation plan that can be strategically implemented and is complementary to other planning efforts. The study identified three transit investment strategies of increasing intensity that could be employed to enhance transit services and facilities in Collin County and to better meet growing mobility and access needs. The analysis supports coordination with existing public transportation providers to develop transit in the county. A complementary study on the Irving to Frisco corridor was also completed in 2021.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Collin County continues to experience exceptional growth. According to the American Community

Collin County Low Income Individuals
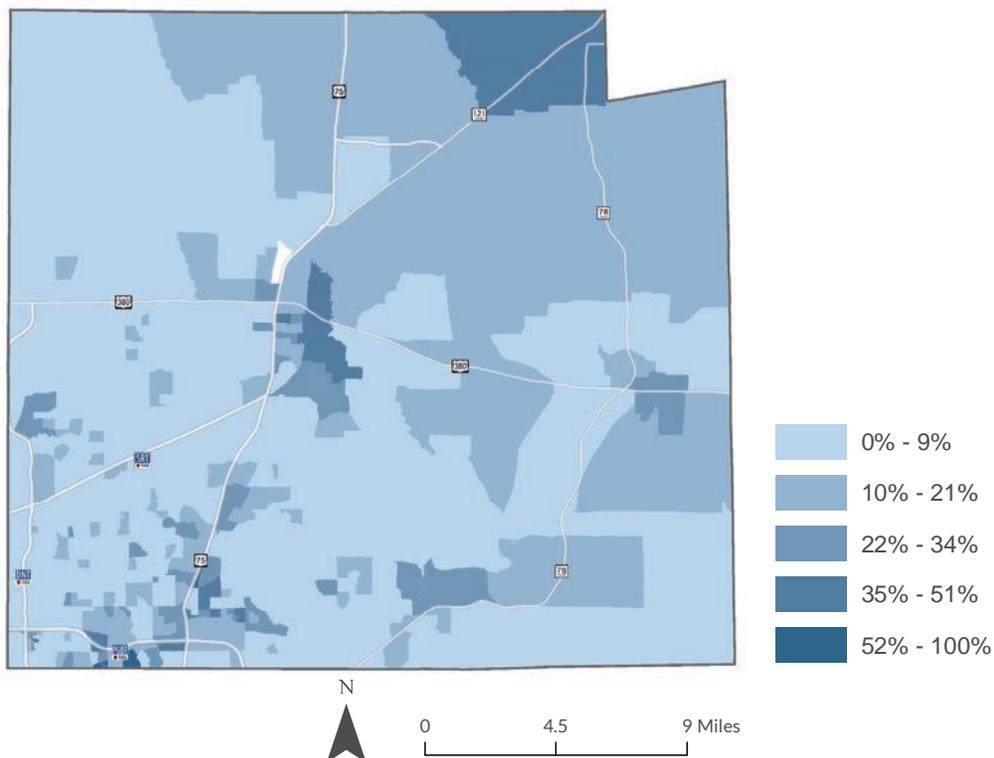
Legend:
- 0% - 9%
- 10% - 21%
- 22% - 34%
- 35% - 51%
- 52% - 100%

N

0   4.5   9 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census block group level

Survey's 5-year estimates, Collin County's population grew by 13% between 2015 and 2019. This puts it in the top 3 counties in our region for population growth over that period. Collin County's population is expected to reach more than 1,600,000 by 2045. According to those same estimates, the county has 973,977 people and 341,163 households. 104,035 of those people are 65 years of age or older, making up just over 10% of the population, just slightly lower than the percentage for the region. Collin County includes more than 67,000 individuals with disabilities, making up 6.9% of the population, as well as more than 86,000 low-income individuals who make up 8.9% of the population. These populations are concentrated in various areas throughout the county (see maps below). The areas with higher concentrations of these populations should be a particular priority in efforts to promote existing or new transit services.

Collin County's racial composition generally matches the region, with the exception of a slightly lower black population at 9.7% and an Asian population that is more than double the regional percentage at 15.2%. In terms of the ethnic breakdown, the county has a higher percentage of individuals with Hispanic or Latino origin at 84.7% compared to 71.3% in the rest of the region. At 2.8%, zero-car households are slightly higher but still comparable to the regional percentage. The percentage of individuals with limited English proficiency is slightly lower than the regional percentage at 9.7%. Collin County's veteran population is very similar to the regional percentage, at 5.8%. The promotion of new or existing services in Collin County should take these populations into account.

OUTREACH PROCESS

Public outreach for Collin County was conducted through a series of virtual public meetings, surveys, and public mapping data. Outreach efforts were advertised through email invitations, the Access North Texas website, NCTCOG's Local Motion publication, a press release, and social media.

Collin County Ethnicity Compared to Regional Ethnicity

	Non-Hispanic or Latino	Hispanic or Latino
Region	71.31%	28.69%
Collin County	84.73%	15.27%
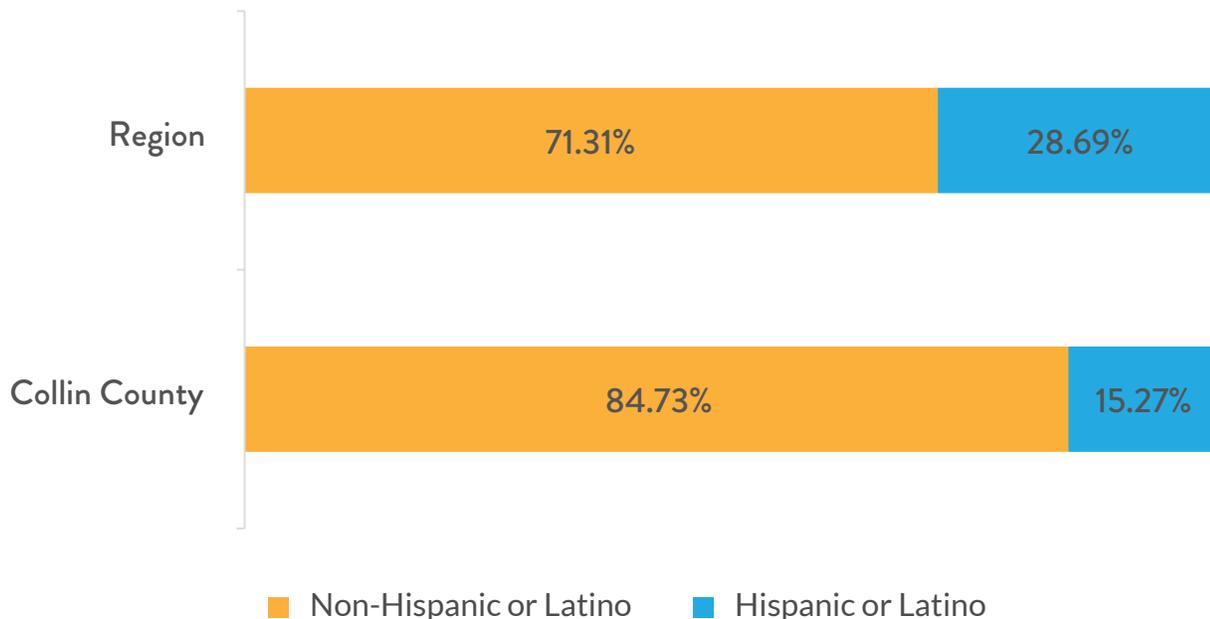
Collin County
Reported Barriers to Mobility
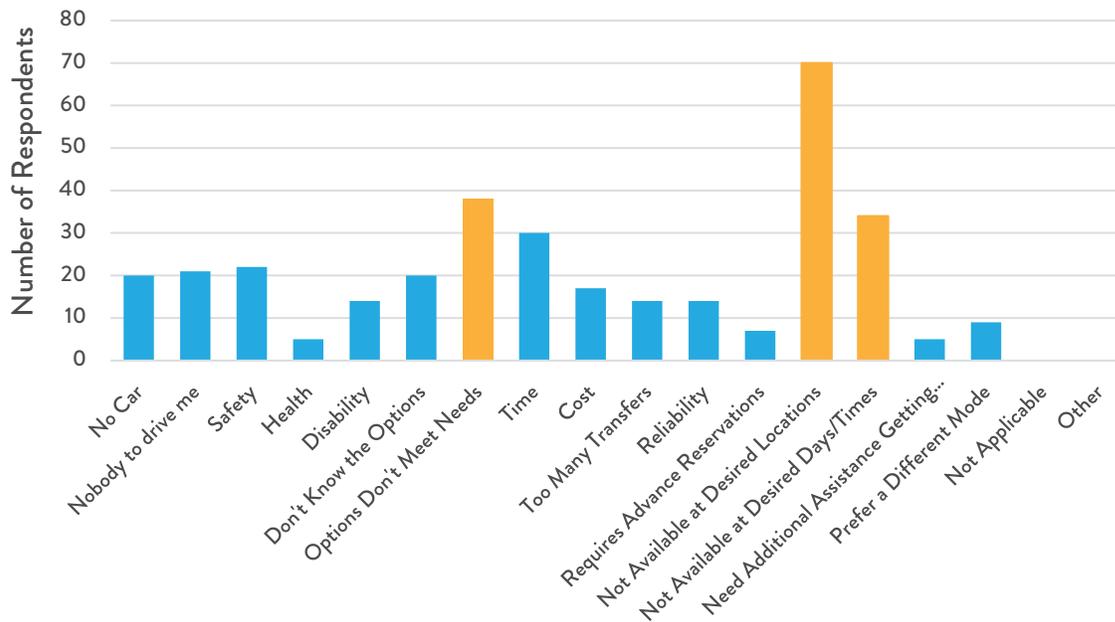
NCTCOG conducted a total of three virtual outreach meetings in Collin County. Email invitations were successfully shared with 181 stakeholders. 9 individuals registered for these meetings and 6 attended. Attendees included members of the public as well as representatives from local transit providers and non-profit agencies.

A transportation survey was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper, and available in English or Spanish. This survey collected input on public transportation in the region. A similar survey was also available online for organizations and agencies that work with transit-dependent populations. In total, 86 responses were received for Collin County. Of these, 70 were received from Collin County residents and 16 were received from agency/organization representatives. Finally, 4 Collin County comments were received through Map Your Experience, a virtual public mapping tool that allows respondents to anonymously share comments and concerns by location.

Data Sources
The planning process for Access North Texas involved NCTCOG staff, community stakeholders, transportation providers, and community members. Through virtual meetings, members from each county prioritized its main concerns about transit access in their area.

Discussion with Collin County residents and other stakeholders highlighted several key concerns. While a handful of transit options exist in Collin County, residents feel the services are restrictive in terms of eligibility, service hours, or destinations. Attendees at meetings noted needing connections to schools, employment, and volunteer work. Residents would also like to see service that creates better connections to existing DART services. McKinney was one location mentioned that it was felt could benefit from a light rail connection. Several attendees mentioned being limited by a one-car household in an area that largely does not provide public transit for the general public. Safety concerns were also common irrespective of mode type.

Desired Transportation Modes in Collin County
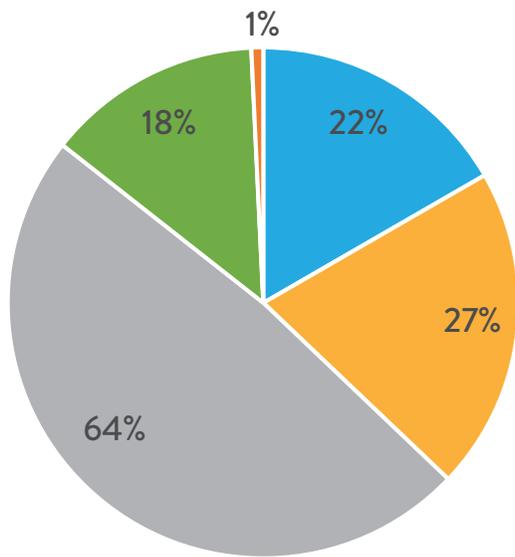
- Fixed-Route Bus — 22%
- Commuter Bus to Light Rail — 27%
- Light Rail — 64%
- Demand Response or On Demand — 18%
- Other — 1%

These concerns, legitimate or perceived, create a barrier to meaningful use of the available services in Collin County and beyond. When discussing preferred modes, expansion of light rail was considered extremely desirable. However, an on-demand service that's open to the general public was also mentioned as an interim step to fixed-route. Overall, residents are looking for a sustainable service that ideally connects to existing successful services in the DART network. Finally, meeting attendees expressed that champions for these improvements are needed in local government to prioritize them now.

Another form of receiving data from Collin County residents and stakeholders was a transportation survey; made available online and translated into English and Spanish. Due to COVID-19 limitations, paper copies were available upon request or through transportation partners. The survey helped NCTCOG staff to collect first-hand data

about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations.

Responses to the transportation surveys totaled 86 for Collin County. Of these 70 were from Collin County residents and 16 were received from agency/organization representatives. The top 3 reported barriers were lack of connections to desired locations, existing options that don't meet rider needs, and lack of service on desired days and times. The survey responses differed slightly from the meeting discussions with most respondents indicating they are not missing any trips. However, similar to the meeting discussions, the most desired transportation enhancement reported was an expansion of service areas. Respondents would also like to see higher frequency and expanded service times. One respondent mentioned needing over an hour of time to go just five to six miles on existing transit options. Over half the responses mentioned specific connections representing desired destinations across the county, underscoring the lack of meaningful transit options currently available. Similar to the meeting discussion, connections to and throughout McKinney, Frisco, and Allen came up multiple times in survey responses. Express buses and light rail were again popular desired modes. All information gained through outreach meetings and transportation survey was gathered to develop the prioritized strategies for Collin County.

TAIT Tool and Environmental Justice

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) identifies communities who face transportation disadvantages and may have greater potential need for public transit. This tool is updated by NCTCOG and is based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Based on information from TAIT, in Collin County there are several census block groups where populations of individuals age 65 and over, below poverty,

Collin County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)
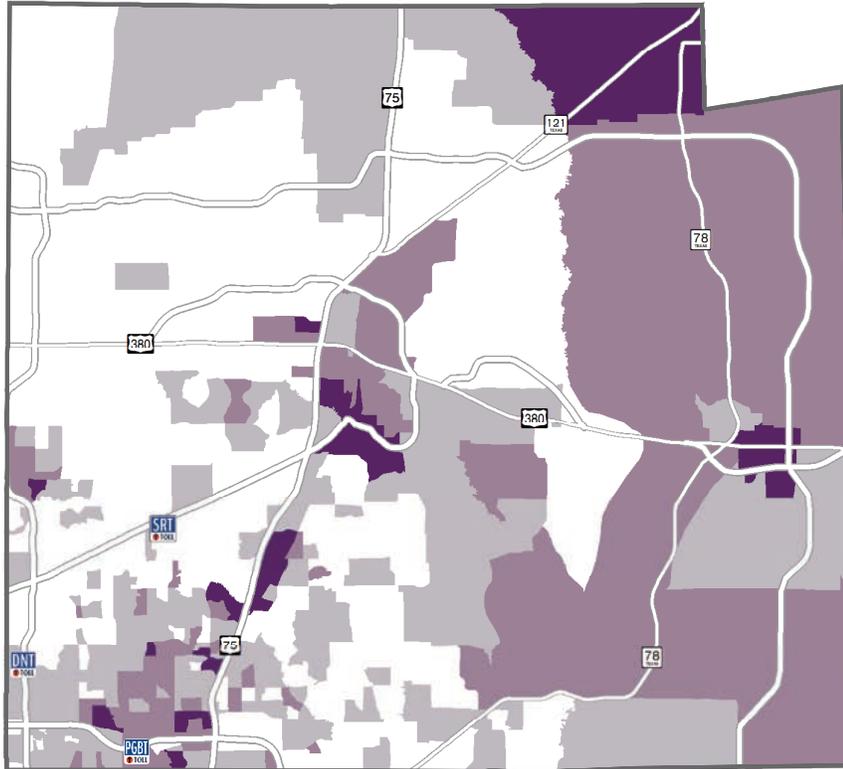
Legend

All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage

One Variable Above Regional Percentage

Two Variables Above Regional Percentage

All Variables Above Regional Percentage

06   .5   13 Miles

N

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening 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.

and with disabilities are above the regional percentages.

Analysis

The highest conglomeration of census block groups within Collin County where the three variables are all above the regional percentage is along US-75 and in the eastern portions of the county. The area including the cities of Westminster and Anna in the northeastern portion of the county represents one of these hot spots. The City of Farmersville is another similar area in the far eastern portion near the intersection of SH 78 and US-380. The majority of the remaining eastern portion falls into the category of two variables above the regional percentage. Other areas of note for meeting both two and three variable thresholds exist near the intersection of US-380 and US-75 and on either side of US-75 moving south. The northwestern portion of the county has the largest amount of block groups with no variables above the regional percentage. In terms of individual variables, the highest number of low-income individuals exists near the cities of Westminster and Anna in the northeastern portion of the county and near the intersection of US-380 and US-75. Individuals with disabilities are found most prominently in the far eastern portion of the county. Concentrations of the senior population are distributed more widely across the entire county. Finally, vehicle ownership is high in Collin County, but block groups with the highest number of zero-car households align with the TAIT three-variable hotspots near the intersection of US-380 and US-75.

Development of Strategies

The prioritized strategies were developed once information from outreach meetings, the transportation survey, and research data was compiled and analyzed for patterns and gaps of service. Observations and recommendations were coded into five main categories to identify themes across the 16-county region and inform regional goals. Those goals provide a framework for the Access North Texas and individual strategies were identified for Collin County to further those goals and provide a plan for transit providers and organizations in future implementation of services. Drafted goals and strategies were provided to the stakeholders for additional feedback and review prior to the finalization of the plan.

Findings

In Collin County, 86 individuals completed the Access North Texas survey. Every single respondent indicated some type of barrier preventing them from getting where they need to go. The combination of all outreach efforts, including surveys and meetings, revealed that residents are eager to see increased transit connections across the county. Existing services only serve portions of the area or are limited to riders that meet certain eligibility requirements. Multiple respondents mentioned wanting expanded service open to the general public. The number of desired connections specified is too great to name them all individually. Currently, most residents do not feel they can live in Collin County without owning a personal vehicle, putting pressure on families in single-car households to meet lifestyle demands. The high level of population growth in this county will only exacerbate the challenges to transportation access. Many are worried about what they will do when they age to a point where they are unable to drive themselves around and would find relief if robust transit options were available.

While most respondents indicated they are not currently missing trips, the number that are will only continue to increase over time. Of those that are missing trips, most are going to employment or social/entertainment destinations. Residents of Collin County consistently shared a desire for light rail service connecting to the larger DART network, as well as other fixed route options.

They are looking for broader coverage in terms of service areas, service times, and frequency that aligns with their needs. 70 of the survey respondents indicated that transit service is currently not available at the locations they need to go and 34 indicated it is not available at the days or times they need. One survey respondent put it best by saying that their time is valuable and the time it currently takes to get to their destination on public transit is too great to justify. Finally, they are also looking for service that feels safer, as many feel uneasy with the perceived lack of safety on transit services they've experienced elsewhere.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The goals and strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders identified as needing to be implemented over the next few years. The strategies build upon the progress and feedback that has been provided since the 2018 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Implementing the Plan

The [Collin County Transit Study](#) identified transit investment strategies of increasing intensity that could be employed to enhance transit services and facilities in Collin County and to better meet growing mobility and access needs. The analysis supports coordination with existing public transportation providers to develop transit in the county. The near-term (1-5 years) phase of the investment strategy most closely aligns with the goals and strategies in this plan.

Agencies and organizations looking to develop transit projects aligned with these strategies may find support through NCTCOG's Transit Strategic Partnerships Program or the TxDOT Call for Projects. Competitive proposals will demonstrate innovative solutions, strategic value, sustainability, implementation capacity, and evidence of

collaboration. Most importantly, the proposal's needs assessment will need to be supported directly by county specific strategies identified in this plan. The most competitive proposals will demonstrate how the proposed project or service will utilize one or more strategies to enhance transit accessibility for transit-dependent populations. More information on the Transit Strategic Partnerships Program can be found at www.nctcog.org/strategicpartnerships-transit. More information on the TxDOT Call for Projects can be found at https://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/public-transportation/local-assistance.html

REFERENCE TO THE APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Collin County, please see Appendices A-E, available online at www.accessnorthtexas.org.

See Appendix A, Summary & Status of 2018 to review previously adopted goals and strategies that were included in the 2018 Access North Texas plan.

See Appendix B, Get-A-Ride Guide, for a list of public and private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These providers are an additional transportation resource that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix C, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed and how to use it.

See Appendix D, Data & Analysis, for copies of the transportation surveys, statistics, and affiliated county-based maps.

See Appendix E, Outreach Meeting and Supplemental Information, for a list of previously held virtual meetings by county with a copy of the presentations.

REGIONAL GOAL	COLLIN COUNTY-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES
Plan and Develop Transportation Options by Assessing Community Need and Challenges	A) Develop potential connections from commuter bus lines to light rail service B) Invest in programs to assist with filling gaps in public transportation and facilitate service for work-related trips
Implement Services by Enhancing Transportation Options and Expanding Where Service Gaps Exist	A) Improve existing public transportation options to better fit the needs of riders and households with 1 or zero cars by increasing service frequency and availability B) Expand eligible trips for specialized public transportation services to include employment, social, religious, and well-being trips C) Expand public transportation services to key destinations throughout the region without comprehensive service and support regional integration of new services.
Coordinate with Transportation Providers, Public Agencies, and Stakeholders to Increase Efficiencies	A) Improve coordination among public transit providers and cities that lack public transportation B) Work with regional and local organizations to increase ease of travel across municipal and county boundaries C) Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate, non-traditional ways to deliver and support public transportation, including but not limited to partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, transportation network companies, shared use mobility programs, and volunteer drivers
Support Public Transportation Recovery and Growth	A) Promote safe and healthy practices on public transportation services B) Explore sources of local revenue for public transportation through partnerships, sponsorships, and contracting for service C) Advocate to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase availability of affordable public transportation options
Promote Access and Information about Available Transportation Options	A) Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transportation through leadership, policy, or funding initiatives

CHAPTER 03

DALLAS COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to document the public transportation needs for seniors, 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 existing services, research conducted and collected, the public outreach meetings, the transportation poll used to collect individualized input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Dallas County.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES

Within Dallas County there are several transportation providers and services. The main transportation provider is Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), and they cover a total of thirteen member cities within the county. DART's services include light rail, local bus service, paratransit service, nearly 30 on-demand Go-Link Zones, and operations of the Dallas Streetcar. The McKinney Avenue Transit Authority (MATA) coordinates with DART to operate the M-Line Trolley in Uptown Dallas. Additionally, the Trinity Railway Express (TRE) is jointly owned and operated by DART and Trinity Metro and connects Dallas to Fort Worth and points in between.

STAR Transit operates three commuter routes in Mesquite, Balch Springs, and Hutchins. Each of these routes connect to DART's light rail system at either the Lawnview Station, Buckner Station, or the UNT Dallas Station. In partnership with the cities of Mesquite, Balch Springs, Seagoville, and DeSoto STAR Transit also provides curb-to-curb transportation in those cities. In addition, STAR Transit operates a GoLink zone with DART and the Southern Dallas County Inland Port

Transportation Management Association to provide on-demand shared rides to areas outside of DART service area but within the Southern Dallas County Inland Port.

The City of Grand Prairie also introduced on-demand services using the Via Rideshare platform in April 2022. Residents can use the new service Monday through Saturday to travel within city limits and to select college campuses. Other specialized services in Grand Prairie include the Grand Connection, providing curb-to-curb transportation to older adults and individuals with disabilities within city limits.

In addition to other transportation options and services, Trinity Metro and Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) operate a commuter vanpool program within the North Central Texas region. As of May 2022, Trinity Metro operated up to 39 vanpools with origins in Dallas County and up to 72 vanpools with destinations in Dallas County. Also, DCTA operated up to 23 vanpools with destinations in Dallas County. The number of vanpools may change month to month as the regional program expands shared commuter transportation opportunities.

Additional resources that provide or facilitate access to transportation include cities, major employers and numerous human service and social service agencies such as Community Council of Greater Dallas, AARP Ride@50+ Program, and Metrocare Services. My Ride North Texas is a project that connects residents to transportation providers and resources, based on their needs. Also, see Appendix B, Get-A-Ride-Guide, for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract to provide specific service for clients.

Even with the transportation providers listed above, transportation gaps still exist in Dallas County. In 2021, the North Central Texas Council of Governments released a transit planning study for the Southern Dallas County communities of Cedar Hill, DeSoto, Duncanville, Lancaster and the Southern Dallas Inland Port area. The study focused transit implementation in areas with limited access to transit services and phased recommendations over the next 20 years. There are also some barriers for riders looking to travel between cities with different providers, rural areas, and seamless connections into neighboring counties.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Demographic data in Dallas County was used to identify populations that may have a high potential need for public transportation. Dallas County continues to experience some growth, as more people relocate into the region. According to the American Community Survey's (ACS) 2019 5-year estimates, since 2015 Dallas County's population has increased by 4.9%. In comparison, the 16-county region has grown 8% in that same period.

According to these same estimates, Dallas County's total population is made up of nearly 2,600,000 individuals and 930,000 households. Of these individuals, 272,730 are 65 years of age or older, making up 10.5% of the population. Dallas County also includes 244,865 individuals with disabilities who make up 9.4% of the population, as well as 550,179 low-income individuals who make up 21.3% of the population.

Dallas County's racial composition is majority white at 61.2%, followed by 22.6% Black, 6.3% Asian, 0.4% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.05% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander,

Dallas County Low-Income Individuals
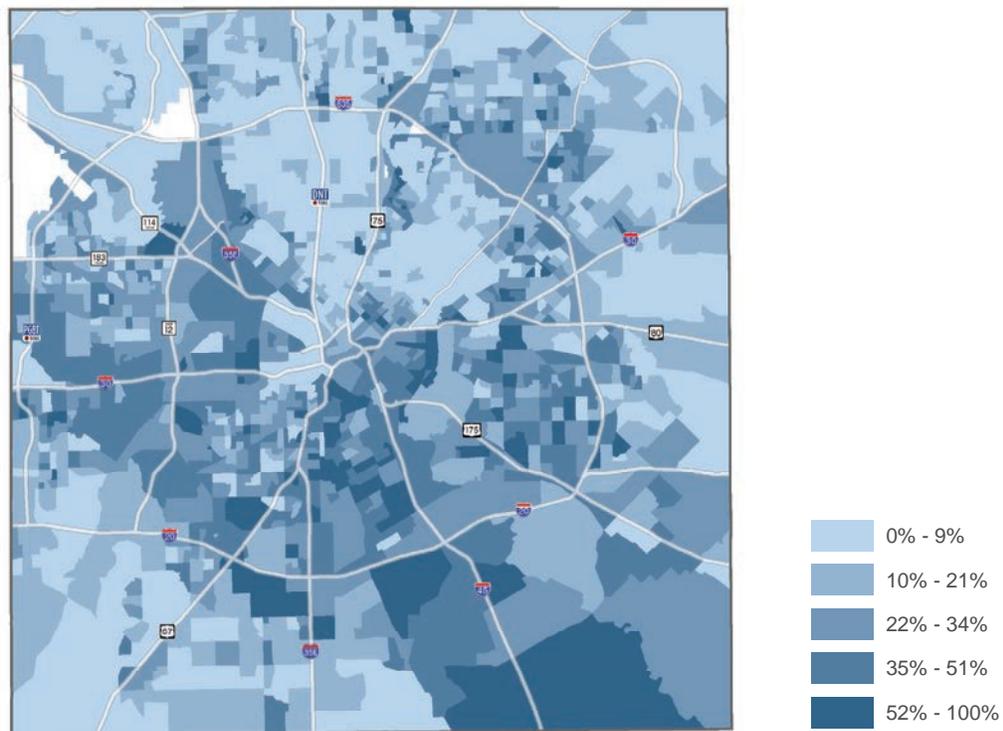
Legend:
- 0% - 9%
- 10% - 21%
- 22% - 34%
- 35% - 51%
- 52% - 100%

N

0   5   10 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census block group level

Dallas County Ethnicity
Compared to Regional Ethnicity

	Non-Hispanic or Latino	Hispanic or Latino
Region	71.31%	28.69%
Dallas County	59.82%	40.18%

■ Non-Hispanic or Latino   ■ Hispanic or Latino
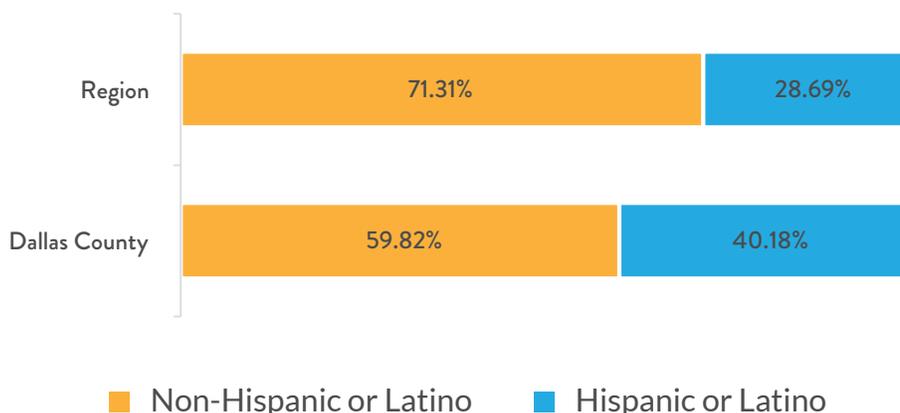
6.8% identifying as another race, and 2.6% indicated two or more races. Dallas County also has a significant Hispanic or Latino population, comprising 40.2% of the population. Additionally, within Dallas County 493,308 individuals, which is 20.5% of residents speak English less than very well, indicating that information about available transit will be difficult for these individuals to access if it is provided only in English

Although the county has a low percentage of zero-car households at 6.8%, that percentage is still higher than the regional percentage of 1.6%. Also, while the number of homeless individuals is naturally difficult to estimate, the Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance (MDHA) 2021 Point in Time Homeless County notes a total of 4,105 sheltered and unsheltered individuals experienced homelessness in Dallas County from when the count occurred. According to MDHA's 2021 State of Homelessness Address, nearly 7,000 individuals experienced homelessness for the first time, needing a different approach and less intensive services as those who are disabled or have experienced homelessness for many years. Efforts to promote existing or new transit services should include strategies to reach each of these populations.

PROCESS
Outreach
Public outreach for Dallas County was conducted through a series of virtual public meetings, surveys, and public mapping data. Outreach efforts were advertised through email invitations, the Access North Texas website, NCTCOG's Local Motion publication, a press release, and social media. Invitees were encouraged to share the invitation with partner organizations and clients to help promote the meetings. Staff sent out 171 emails inviting Dallas stakeholders and contacts to participate in public outreach efforts.
Three virtual public meetings in July 2021 saw 7 attendees including members of the public and representatives from county non-profits and transit providers. Additional conversations with staff from a local a community organization in Dallas County supplemented the larger meeting participation. The organization serves seniors and individuals with disabilities.

A transportation survey was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper, and available in English and Spanish. This survey collected input on public transportation in the region. A similar survey was also available online for organizations and agencies that work with

Dallas County Zero-Car Households

0% - 3%
4% - 9%
10% - 18%
19% - 30%
31% - 65%

N

0   5   10 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census block group level
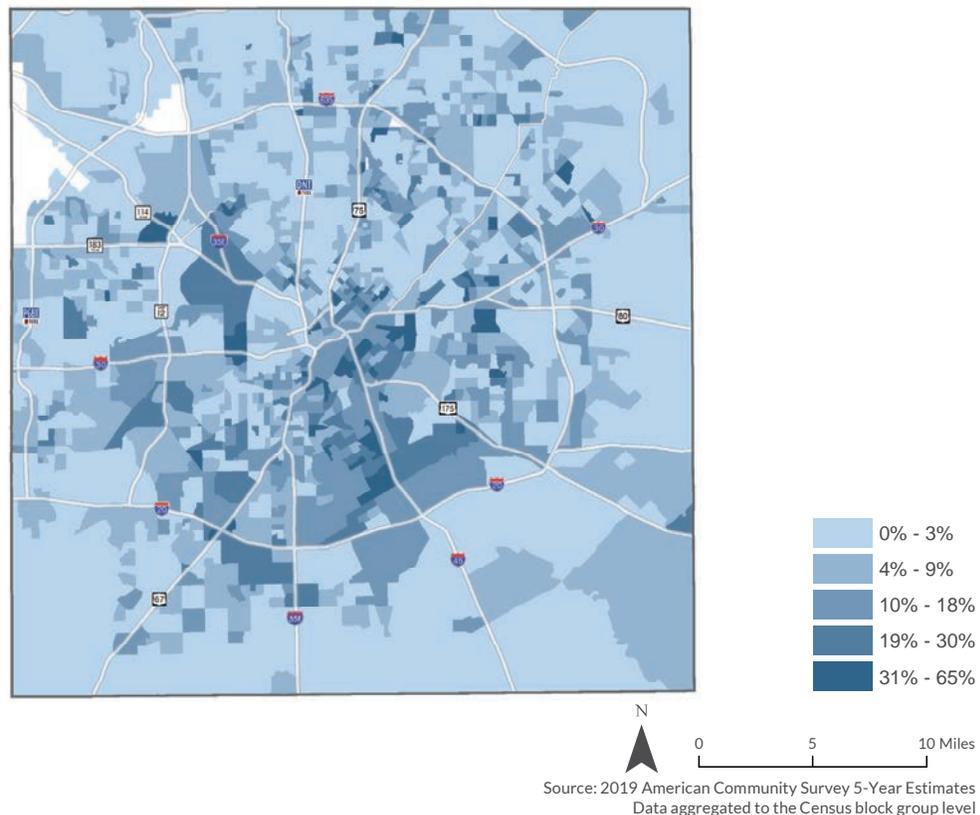
transit-dependent populations. In total, 685 responses were received for Dallas County. Of these 672 were received from Dallas County residents and 13 were received from agency/organization representatives. Finally, during the outreach period 3 transit comments from Dallas County were received through Map Your Experience, a virtual public mapping tool that allows respondents to anonymously share comments and concerns by location.

Data Sources

The planning process for Access North Texas involved NCTCOG staff, community stakeholders, transportation providers, and community members. Through virtual meetings, members from each county prioritized its main concerns about transit access in their area.

Discussion with Dallas County residents and stakeholders highlighted several key concerns for transit users. The primary concern of participants

was the awareness of available resources, followed by enhancing the user's experience and creating targeted implementation plans. Attendees noted that referral services, such as those provided by AARP, have served as an access point for transportation information and to connect riders to transportation options. As for enhancing user experience, agencies and non-profit organizations could benefit from greater efforts to educate the public on new services and existing resources. Although discussions occurred prior to major network changes within the DART service area, these concerns may continue to be relevant as users begin or return to use public transportation.

Another form of receiving data from Dallas County residents and stakeholders was a transportation survey; made available online and translated into English and Spanish. Due to COVID-19 limitations, paper copies were available upon request or through transportation partners. The survey helped NCTCOG staff to collect first-hand data

Dallas County
Reported Barriers to Mobility
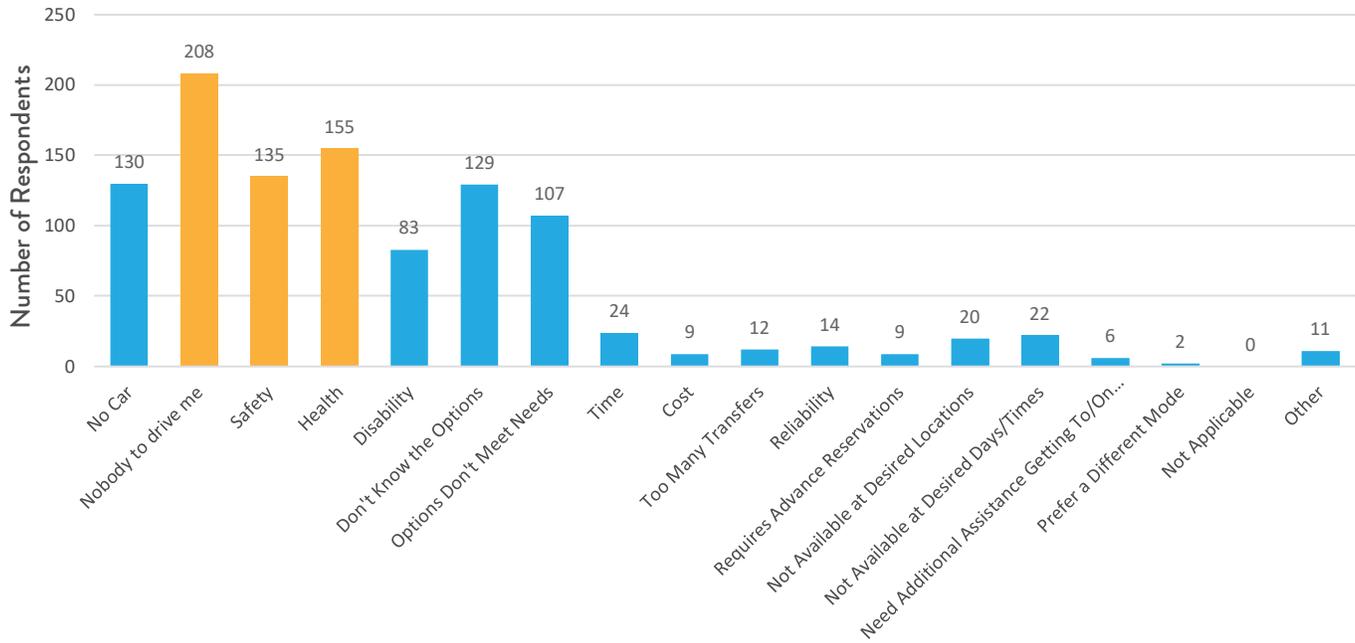
Chart: Number of Respondents by reported barrier.
- No Car: 130
- Nobody to drive me: 208
- Safety: 135
- Health: 155
- Disability: 83
- Don't Know the Options: 129
- Options Don't Meet Needs: 107
- Time: 24
- Cost: 9
- Too Many Transfers: 12
- Reliability: 14
- Requires Advance Reservations: 9
- Not Available at Desired Locations: 20
- Not Available at Desired Days/Times: 22
- Need Additional Assistance Getting To/On...: 6
- Prefer a Different Mode: 2
- Not Applicable: 0
- Other: 11

about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations.

Responses to the transportation surveys totaled 685 for Dallas County. Of these 672 were received from Dallas County residents and 13 were received from agency/organization representatives. The top 3 reported barriers were not having access to someone to drive them, safety, and health concerns. Compared to the previous plan, more respondents in Dallas County indicated that safety and health concerns were barriers for them in using public transportation. The survey was conducted while communities were in high alert due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so respondents were likely concerned with risks involved in travelling with others. Public education campaigns have been implemented by the various public transportation agencies and data shows that respondents desire access to multiple transportation modes.

Similar to the meeting discussions, respondents also expressed not knowing about their transit

options and that current options don't meet their transportation needs. Additionally, the most desired transportation enhancement reported is greater service areas and times, along with greater frequency. Although responses are prior to the implementation of DART's redesigned network, discussions support greater service and the need to increase access to information on available transportation options.

The survey also found that users would also like to see fewer transfers for regional trips and better regional connectivity. Several respondents mentioned specific connections outside of current transit service areas or near entertainment centers outside of Dallas County. Crossing service area boundaries is named as a significant barrier to traveling across the county and across the region.

All information gained through outreach meetings and transportation survey was gathered to develop the prioritized strategies for Dallas County.

Desired Transportation Modes in Dallas County
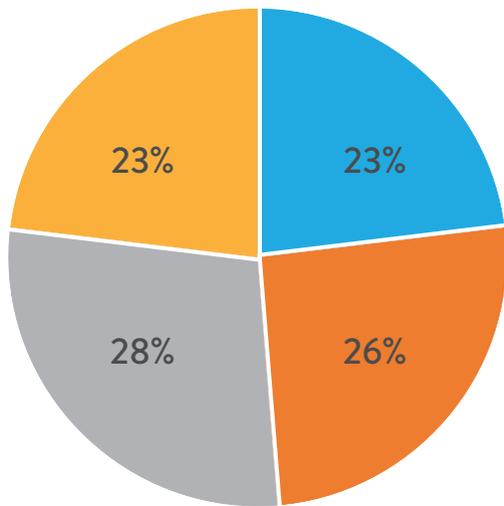
- 🟦 Fixed-Route Bus
- 🟧 Commuter Bus to Light Rail
- ⬜ Light Rail
- 🟨 Demand Response or On Demand

TAIT Tool and Environmental Justice

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) identifies communities who face transportation disadvantages and may have greater potential need for public transit. This tool is updated by the North Central Texas Council of Governments and is based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Based on information from TAIT, in Dallas County there are many census block groups where populations of individuals age 65 and over, below poverty, and with disabilities are above the regional percentages.

Analysis

The highest conglomeration of census block groups within Dallas County where the three variables are all above the regional percentage is in the south and southeast portion of the county. This area includes the cities of Dallas, Mesquite, Balch Springs, Hutchins, Wilmer, Lancaster, DeSoto, and Duncanville. Areas where census block groups have three variables above the

regional average are mostly scattered south of I30 and east of Hwy 67. The rest of the area is covered with census block groups with one or two variables above the regional average. Along the US 67 corridor near Duncanville, DeSoto, and Cedar Hill the block groups with two variables above the regional percentage mostly contain individuals 65 and over and individuals with disabilities. Moving east, towards the Southern Inland Port area, the block groups with two variables above the regional percentage shift and are predominately individuals with disabilities and populations living below the poverty line.

In northeast Dallas County, there are also census block groups where the percentage of individuals 65 and over, populations below the poverty line, and those with disabilities are all above the regional percentages. Most of the census block groups with all three variables above the regional average are near downtown Dallas and the City of Garland. The Garland area also has census block groups with just one or two variables above the regional percentage. Most of these contain higher levels of persons below the poverty line and either individuals with disabilities or individuals aged 65 and over.

Other areas with all three variables above the regional percentage include the northeast portion of the county, along the I35 corridor and 183 in Irving. Many census block groups with two variables above the regional percentage in the northeastern portion of Dallas County are persons below the poverty line and individuals with disabilities. Areas where the percentage of individuals 65 or older is higher than the regional percentage are distributed across the northeastern portion with concentrations found around Love Field Airport and across the City of Irving.

Dallas County Transit
Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

Legend

All Variables At or Below
Regional Percentage

One Variable Above
Regional Percentage

Two Variables Above
Regional Percentage

All Variables Above
Regional Percentage

N

0   7   14 Miles

**Source: 2019 American Community
Survey 5-Year Estimates**

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary
screening 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.

Development of Strategies

The prioritized strategies were developed once information from outreach meetings, the transportation poll, and research data was compiled and analyzed for patterns and gaps of service. Observations and recommendations were coded into five (5) main categories to identify themes across the 16-county region and inform regional goals. Those goals provide a framework for the Access North Texas and individual strategies were identified for Dallas County to further those goals and provide a plan for transit providers and organizations in future implementation of services. Drafted goals and strategies were provided to the stakeholders for additional feedback and review prior to the finalization of the plan.

Findings

In Dallas County 672 individuals completed the Access North Texas survey. Many of the respondents indicated they did not have a car or someone who could drive them. For those that depend on public transportation, they experience additional transportation barriers and may not be able to reach critical appointments. Nearly 450 responses indicate that in the past, they have had to miss work, medical, and meal trips or experienced delays due to lack of transportation options. The TAIT analysis tool identified the southern half of the county as having high concentrations of transit dependent populations and zero-car households. The accessibility of transit in these areas is important for connecting individuals to job opportunities and critical services.

The combination of all outreach efforts, including surveys and meetings, revealed that respondents want to see more information about available transportation options. Within Dallas County, riders have difficulty distinguishing between the different transportation services. For instance, in areas south of the City of Dallas there are several cities that are not members of a transit authority and provide contracted services, which may have their own transportation programs with varying eligibility and hours. Additionally, for areas where there are no public transportation options, respondents are faced with private transportation options which typically have higher user costs.

Given the multiple modes and providers in the region and in Dallas County, residents also expressed wanting to see better connectivity across modes and providers. Many of the locations listed by respondents were entertainment and shopping centers where currently there is limited or no public transportation options available. Therefore, even if the rider has access to public transportation within Dallas County, they are often unable to reach destinations outside the county or find the trip too difficult to complete.

Outreach efforts also indicated a large need for transportation providers and partners to promote existing options and ensure that services are being provided in a safe manner. Specifically, riders indicated health risks such as COVID-19 as a barrier to using public transportation. The transportation agencies have conducted individual and coordinated campaigns to inform riders of measures they are taking to ensure trips are safe and continuing these efforts in future health emergencies can help riders feel more comfortable using public transportation. Additionally, riders are looking for services that feel safer since some generally perceive a lack of safety on public transportation. The impact of COVID-19 was greatly felt by riders and transit agencies alike since the shortage of drivers and security personnel has impacted the level of services being provided at a local level. As the region moves forward from the COVID-19 pandemic, transit agencies and partners should ensure the communication with the public continues to be a focus in order to build trust among current and potential riders.

It's also worth noting that DART, the largest transit provider in Dallas County, implemented their bus network redesign, **DARTzoom**, in January 2022 after outreach for this plan was completed. Any associated improvements to the system that addressed connectivity and rider education are not captured in the feedback collected for this plan but will be evaluated in future updates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The goals and strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders identified as needing to be implemented over the next few years. The strategies build upon the progress and feedback that has been provided since the 2018 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Implementing the Plan

NCTCOG was awarded a 2021 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation to enhance mobility within the Southern Dallas Inland Port. Currently, on-demand services are operated by STAR Transit in coordination with DART to areas outside of DART service area but within the Southern Dallas County Inland Port. The project will seek to expand hours and enhance services in order to connect individuals with reliable public transportation and a significant and growing job center. Services will be evaluated in the next Access North Texas update.

The **Southern Dallas Transit Study** was completed in July 2021 and it focuses on the communities of Cedar Hill, DeSoto, Duncanville, Lancaster, and the Southern Dallas Inland Port area. The study includes a needs assessment of the area and provides multi-phase service recommendations

for the area. The study recommends that in Phase 1 (1-5 Years) a foundation of transit services is built in the area by introducing micro transit zones in each city for local circulation and connecting those cities to regional transit nodes. Implementation of Phase I from this plan aligns with strategies developed under Access North Texas for Dallas County.

In January 2022, DART implemented their bus network redesign, **DARTzoom**, to address transit challenges in the county. Through these changes, DART can offer more frequent routes, longer service hours, and has expanded their on-demand service areas. This along with their education campaign, begins to address various strategies listed for Dallas County. The impact of these efforts will be evaluated in future updates.

In early 2022, NCTCOG also began a transit study for **East Dallas, Kaufman, and Rockwall Counties**. This study aims to develop a comprehensive public transportation plan for cities in Eastern Dallas County that are not members of Dallas Area Rapid Transit, as well as Kaufman and Rockwall counties. Once complete, recommendations from this study will be evaluated in future Access North Texas updates.

Agencies and organizations looking to develop transit projects aligned with these strategies may find support through NCTCOG's Transit Strategic Partnerships Program or the TxDOT Call for Projects. Competitive proposals will demonstrate innovative solutions, strategic value, sustainability, implementation capacity, and evidence of collaboration. Most importantly, the proposal's needs assessment will need to be supported directly by county specific strategies identified in this plan. The most competitive proposals will demonstrate how the proposed project or service will utilize one or more strategies to enhance transit accessibility for transit-dependent

REGIONAL GOAL	DALLAS COUNTY-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES
Plan and Develop Transportation Options by Assessing Community Need and Challenges	A) Invest in programs to assist with filling gaps in public transportation and facilitate service for work-related trips B) Invest in programs that facilitate transportation trips to medical and healthcare appointments C) Launch a mobility toolbox to educate on and promote public transportation options such as fixed route, demand-respond, on-demand services, etc.
Implement Services by Enhancing Transportation Options and Expanding Where Service Gaps Exist	A) Improve existing public transportation options to better fit the needs of riders and households with 1 or zero cars by increasing service frequency and availability B) Expand eligible trips for specialized public transportation services to include employment, social, religious, and well-being trips C) Establish additional assistance or more specialized public transportation options for customers who are not ADA paratransit eligible or physically capable of utilizing regular public transportation services D) Expand service hours to support needs of low-income individuals in the service industry and outside traditional 9am-5pm jobs
Coordinate with Transportation Providers, Public Agencies, and Stakeholders to Increase Efficiencies	A) Work with regional and local organizations to increase ease of travel across municipal and county boundaries B) Foster cooperation between public transit providers within counties to allow better connectivity and simplify regional trips
Support Public Transportation Recovery and Growth	A) Promote safe and healthy practices on public transportation services B) Partner with organizations to coordinate training and recruitment for future public transportation professionals and create pipelines with area schools C) Establish driver recruitment and retention programs for public transportation services to address difficulties in retaining drivers

REGIONAL GOAL	COUNTY-SPECIFIC STRATEGIEST
Promote Access and Information about Available Transportation Options	A) Enhance communication and outreach programs to improve awareness of existing or new transportation options B) Conduct travel training to educate the public on available services and policies C) Partner with agencies, recreation centers, senior residencies, housing assisted living centers, and other organizations to publicize information

populations. More information on the Transit Strategic Partnerships Program can be found at **www.nctcog.org/strategicpartnerships-transit**. More information on the TxDOT Call for Projects can be found at **https://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/public-transportation/local-assistance.html**

REFERENCE TO THE APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Dallas County, please see Appendices A-E, available online at **www.accessnorthtexas.org**.

See Appendix A, Summary & Status of 2018 to review previously adopted goals and strategies that were included in the 2018 Access North Texas plan.

See Appendix B, Get-A-Ride Guide, for a list of public and private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These providers are an additional transportation resource that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix C, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed and how to use it.

See Appendix D, Data & Analysis, for copies of the transportation surveys, statistics, and affiliated county-based maps.

See Appendix E, Outreach Meeting and Supplemental Information, for a list of previously held virtual meetings by county with a copy of the presentations.

DENTON COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to document the public transportation needs for seniors, 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 existing services, research conducted and collected, the public outreach meetings, the transportation poll used to collect individualized input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Denton County.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES

Denton County has two public transportation providers which work together to offer services to both the urban and rural portions of the county: Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) in the more urban areas and Span, Inc. which connects the rural areas of the county. DCTA provides transportation services within and between the City of Denton, Highland Village, and Lewisville and operates a multimodal system including A-train rail service, Connect Bus and University fixed-route services, regional North Texas Xpress commuter bus service, a commuter vanpool program, and GoZone on-demand services. DCTA provides transportation for the general public with service times varying by mode. DCTA bus, rail, and on-demand service availability ranges from 5:00am to 10:00pm Monday – Friday, and between 8:00am to 8:00pm on Saturday. DCTA GoZone provides Sunday hours, operating from 8:00am to 6:00pm in Denton and Lewisville/Highland Village GoZones. Service costs can also vary by mode. A-Train fixed-route rail service and Xpress Bus services cost $1.50 for a local morning or afternoon pass and $3.00 for a day

pass. Reduced morning or afternoon passes are also available for $0.75 for qualifying riders. DCTA GoZone Rides are currently $0.75 per trip.

In addition to other transportation options and services, the Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) operates a commuter vanpool program within the North Central Texas region. As of May 2022, DCTA operated up to 29 vanpools with origins in Denton County and up to 20 vanpools with destinations in Denton County. The number of vanpools may change month to month as the regional program expands shared commuter transportations opportunities.

Denton County is also serviced by Span, Inc., which operates primarily in the areas of Denton County not served by DCTA, including Flower Mound, Little Elm, Northlake, and surrounding areas. Span operates demand-response and curb-to-curb services. Additionally, Span is the designated rural provider in Denton County, serving primarily seniors, veterans, and individuals with disabilities, though rides are open to the general public. Services are generally available from 7:00am to 6:00pm Monday through Friday and riders must book rides at least one day in advance. Transit services cost $6.00 per trip, though seniors and individuals with disabilities rides are discounted at $3.00 per trip.

Finally, see Appendix B 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). Organizations can also contract with them to provide specific services for clients.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The demographic composition of Denton County reflects a rapidly growing population that may have high need for public transportation. According to the American Community Survey's 2019 5-year estimates, Denton County's

population has experienced a significant amount of growth, increasing by 13.9% since 2015. Denton County's total population is made up of more than 833,000 individuals and more than 290,000 households according to the same estimates. Of this total population amount, over 82,000 individuals are 65 years of age and older, making up 9.9% of the population. Over 66,000 individuals within Denton County have a disability, making up 7.9% of the population, and over 83,000 individuals are considered low-income, making up 10.1% of the population. Denton County also hosts relatively low percentage of zero-car households at just 2.6% of households.

Denton County's racial composition includes a majority White population, making up 74.3% of the total population, followed by 9.8% Black, 8.7% Asian, 0.5% total American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.08% total Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 3% Other Race, and 3.6% total Two or More Races. Denton County has a more heavily White population at 74.3% compared to the aggregate population of the 16-county North Central Texas Region, in which 68.8% of the total population is White. Denton County is comprised of 19.30% Hispanic or Latino individuals and contains a portion of the population with limited English proficiency, making up 7.79% of the total population. Efforts to promote existing or new transit services should include strategies to reach this population.

PROCESS
Outreach
Public outreach for Denton County was conducted through a series of virtual public meetings, one-on-one meetings with county stakeholders, surveys, and public mapping data. Outreach efforts were

Denton County Zero-Car Households

Legend:
- 0% - 3%
- 4% - 9%
- 10% - 18%
- 19% - 30%
- 31% - 65%

N

0   5   10 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
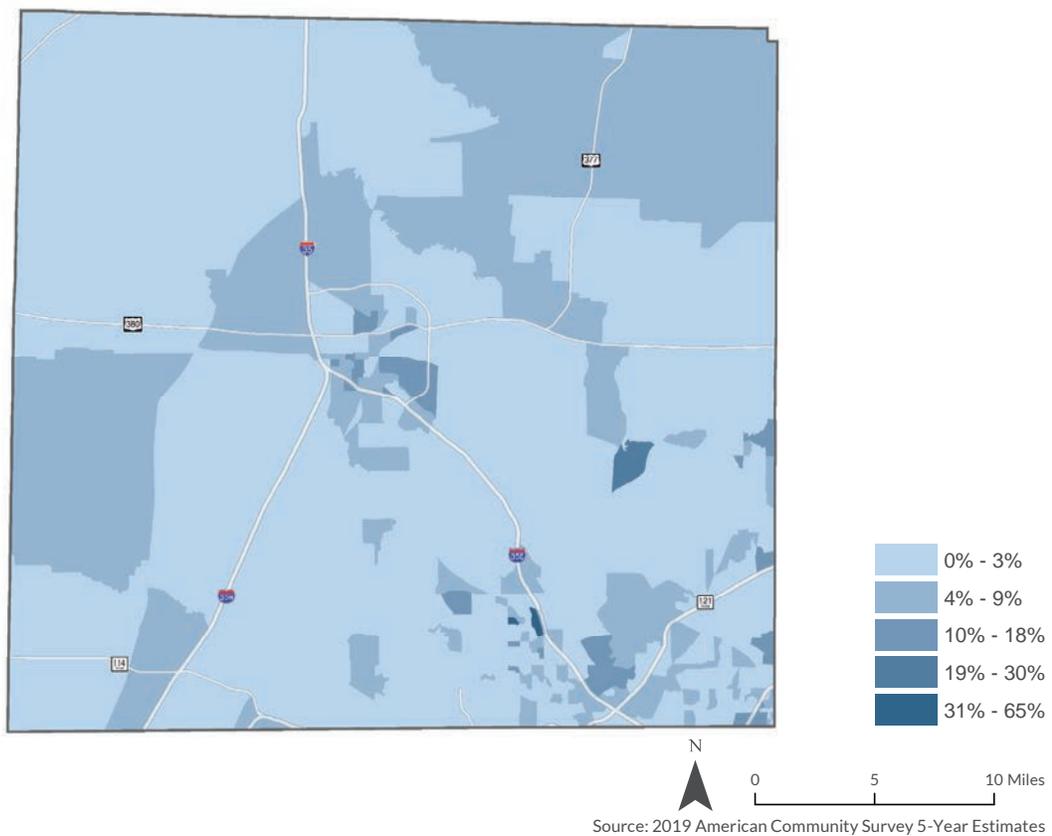
Denton County Racial Composition
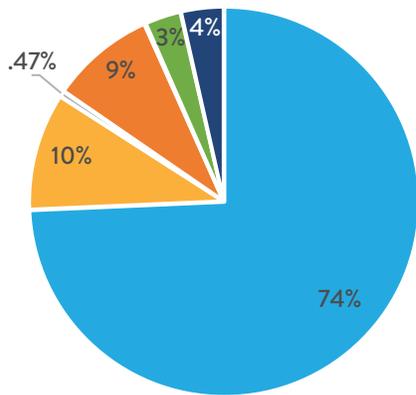
- White — 74%
- Black — 10%
- American Indian or Alaska Native — .47%
- Asian — 9%
- Some Other Race — 3%
- Two or More Races — 4%

advertised through our Access North Texas website and Local Motion publication.

Staff sent out 356 emails inviting Denton stakeholders and contacts to participate in public outreach efforts. Virtual public meetings saw 10 attendees including members of the public and representatives from county non-profits and transit providers. The virtual public survey received 25 responses from Denton County residents and the agency survey received 47 responses from Denton County stakeholders and organizations. An additional 11 one-on-one meetings were hosted with stakeholders from non-profits and municipalities throughout Denton County.

Another form of receiving data from Denton County residents and stakeholders was a transportation survey; made available online and translated into English and Spanish. Due to COVID-19 limitations, paper copies were available upon request or through transportation partners. The survey helped NCTCOG staff to collect first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations.

Data Sources

The planning process for Access North Texas involved North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff, community stakeholders, transportation providers, and community members. Through virtual meetings, members from each county prioritized its main concerns about transit access in their area.

Discussions with Denton County residents included opinions surrounding a local shift in modes of public transportation. DCTA shifted to offering less fixed-route bus service and focusing more on their new on-demand rideshare service called GoZone. DCTA's new GoZone rideshare program launched September 7, 2021. While some favored local transitions to on-demand public transportation services, others noted concerns with affordability, reliability, and sustainability. Virtual outreach meetings revealed that Denton County residents and stakeholders look forward to increased accessibility and mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities with the introduction of on-demand transit services by the local transit authority. Still others mentioned they anticipated barriers related to the dependence upon smart-phone technology and the potential complications that may bring for seniors and low-income populations.

One common theme among discussions with Denton County residents and stakeholders was the need for a more comprehensive public education campaign in which local transportation providers provide increased access to information about riding public transit. Participants mentioned the need to implement educational efforts especially among seniors and students, printing materials rather than relying heavily on digital resources.

Staff received 72 survey responses from Denton County including 25 responses from the public surveys and 47 responses from the agency survey. The survey revealed that among barriers to public

transportation experienced in Denton County, respondents noted that public transportation is not available at the days or times and in the locations that they need to go. Many stated that public transportation does not meet their needs or that public transportation in their area is not sufficiently reliable.

When prompted to note the kinds of missed trips individuals were experiencing, a large portion of respondents stated they were not missing trips. However, those who were missing trips or delayed in their trips noted that they were primarily missing work and medical trips. Light rail service was the most desired form of public transportation according to Denton County respondents. This was followed by demand-response or on-demand transportation and fixed-route bus service. Enhancements respondents would like to see in Denton's public transportation include expanded service areas, expanded service times, increased frequency, and increased reliability in transit services. Some additional items addressed through virtual outreach meetings and one-one-one meetings included driver shortages and interest in increased efforts toward affordable fares.

All information gained through outreach meetings and transportation survey was gathered to develop the prioritized strategies for Denton County.

TAIT Tool and Environmental Justice
The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) identifies communities who face transportation disadvantages and may have greater potential need for public transit. This tool is updated by the North Central Texas Council of Governments and is based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Based on information from TAIT, in Denton County there are relatively few census block groups where populations of individuals age 65 and over, below poverty, and with disabilities are above the regional percentages.

Analysis
The Denton County TAIT map reveals that Denton County contains relatively few Census blocks wherein the proportion of populations of seniors, individuals with disabilities, and people below the poverty line is above the regional average. The populations which fit this description are located just outside the loop on the west side of the city of Denton, on the southeast side of the city of Denton, in the northeast corner of the county along I-377, and in Lake Dallas on the east side of I-35E. Denton County does host a number of Census block groups in which two variables are above the regional average, most of which are located in the northwest corner of the county and inside the city of Denton.

Development of Strategies
The prioritized strategies were developed once information from outreach meetings, the transportation poll, and research data was compiled and analyzed for patterns and gaps of service. Observations and recommendations were coded into five (5) main categories to identify themes across the 16-county region and inform regional goals. Those goals provide a framework for the Access North Texas and individual strategies were identified for Denton County to further those goals and provide a plan for transit providers and organizations in future implementation of services. Drafted goals and strategies were provided to the stakeholders for additional feedback and review prior to the finalization of the plan.

FINDINGS
Outreach efforts within Denton County revealed that the county's recent changes have prompted discussion of preferred mode with many Denton residents hoping to see increased light rail and on-demand or demand-response service as public transportation options increase in Denton County. Accessibility and affordability concerns continue

Denton County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)
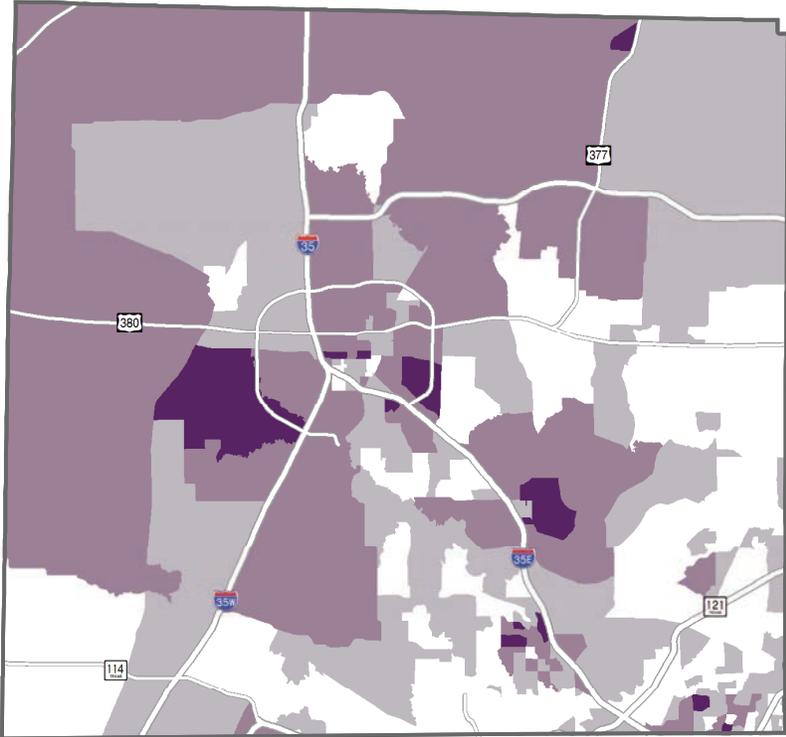
Legend

All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage

One Variable Above Regional Percentage

Two Variables Above Regional Percentage

All Variables Above Regional Percentage

0   7   14 Miles

N

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening 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.

to be a concern surrounding the implementation of on-demand services, though many are excited about the changes in public transportation in Denton County. Outreach also revealed that many individuals and organizations would like to see increased access to information about how to use and ride public transportation.

Of the 72 individuals who completed the Access North Texas public survey, 57% of responses indicated that individuals could get to where they need to go, while others noted several barriers to reaching their destinations with transit service areas and service times chief among them. Many noted a desire for better connectivity in and to Lewisville, Flower Mound, Corinth, and the Colony or indicated complications with traveling across county and municipal lines, desiring to travel from the city of Denton into the rural parts of the county.

Outreach efforts revealed that 30 respondents indicated concerns with transit reliability in Denton County and 30 respondents also indicated concerns with transit frequency in the county. Health and safety were also listed as important concerns by 10 and 11 respondents respectively. Also, 17 respondents noted a desire for fewer transfers and better regional connectivity. Finally, 26 respondents indicated a need for better information about how to use transit and available transit resources.

Overall, Denton County residents and stakeholders are interested in seeing a more reliable, frequent, transit service that operates for longer hours in expanded service areas throughout the county. Respondents would like to have better access to destinations outside of county and municipal boundaries through the expansion of light rail, on-demand and demand-response solutions, and fixed-route bus services. Denton County residents would like better access to work, medical appointments, and other destinations

and easier access to information about the public transit options available for them to do so.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The goals and strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders identified as needing to be implemented over the next few years. The strategies build upon the progress and feedback that has been provided since the 2018 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Implementing the Plan

Denton County transit providers are already taking strides to implement some of these strategies including the growth of on-demand transit options through the DCTA GoZone implementation and expansion of 2021, which has likely prompted much of the discussion of transportation modes identified through public outreach. Similarly, DCTA has created online resources and have ongoing public education efforts such as Operation Lifesaver and DCTA Rail Ready curriculum to provide transit-related informational activities, videos and links to increase public knowledge on rail safety. DCTA also offers a free travel training program by providing personal, step-by-step instructions to seniors and those with disabilities on how to effectively use the DCTA system and build the skills, confidence, and independence to use public transportation.

In early 2022, NCTCOG initiated the Denton County Transit Study to develop a comprehensive approach to planning and implementing transit services outside of transit authority service areas in Denton County. The study will consider internal and regional connections and focus on strategic near-term implementation, increased transportation options, limited long-range investment opportunities including fixed guideway

REGIONAL GOAL	DENTON COUNTY-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES
Plan and Develop Transportation Options by Assessing Community Need and Challenges	A) Conduct planning activities to further identify public transportation needs of residents outside of existing transportation authorities and define additional coordination opportunities for existing providers B) Invest in programs to assist with filling gaps in public transportation and facilitate service for work-related trips C) Launch a mobility toolbox to educate on and promote public transportation options such as fixed route, demand-respond, on-demand services, etc.
Implement Services by Enhancing Transportation Options and Expanding Where Service Gaps Exist	A) Expand service hours to support needs of low-income individuals in the service industry and outside traditional 9am-5pm jobs B) Expand public transportation services to key destinations throughout the region without comprehensive service and support regional integration of new services.
Coordinate with Transportation Providers, Public Agencies, and Stakeholders to Increase Efficiencies	A) Improve coordination among public transit providers and cities that lack public transportation B) Work with regional and local organizations to increase ease of travel across municipal and county boundaries C) Foster cooperation between public transit providers within counties to allow better connectivity and simplify regional trips D) Create and support partnerships between public transit providers and local organizations to increase opportunities to make fares more affordable for those in need
Support Public Transportation Recovery and Growth	A) Promote safe and healthy practices on public transportation services B) Establish driver recruitment and retention programs for public transportation services to address difficulties in retaining drivers
Promote Access and Information about Available Transportation Options	A) Enhance communication and outreach programs to improve awareness of existing or new transportation options B) Partner with agencies, recreation centers, senior residencies, housing assisted living centers, and other organizations to publicize information

alternatives, funding options, and private-sector involvement. A Transit Vision, along with specific goals and objectives, will be developed that guide the transit planning process, recommendations, and implementation. The study is anticipated to be completed by Summer 2023.

Agencies and organizations looking to develop transit projects aligned with these strategies may find support through NCTCOG's Transit Strategic Partnerships Program or the TxDOT Call for Projects. Competitive proposals will demonstrate innovative solutions, strategic value, sustainability, implementation capacity, and evidence of collaboration. Most importantly, the proposal's needs assessment will need to be supported directly by county specific strategies identified in this plan. The most competitive proposals will demonstrate how the proposed project or service will utilize one or more strategies to enhance transit accessibility for transit-dependent populations. More information on the Transit Strategic Partnerships Program can be found at www.nctcog.org/strategicpartnerships-transit. More information on the TxDOT Call for Projects can be found at **www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/ division/public-transportation/local-assistance. html.**

REFERENCE TO THE APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Denton County, please see Appendices A-E, available online at www.accessnorthtexas.org.

See Appendix A, Summary & Status of 2018 to review previously adopted goals and strategies that were included in the 2018 Access North Texas plan.

See Appendix B, Get-A-Ride Guide, for a list of public and private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These providers are an additional transportation resource that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix C, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed and how to use it.

See Appendix D, Data & Analysis, for copies of the transportation surveys, statistics, and affiliated county-based maps.

See Appendix E, Outreach Meeting and Supplemental Information, for a list of previously held virtual meetings by county with a copy of the presentations.

ELLIS AND NAVARRO COUNTIES

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to document the public transportation needs for seniors, 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 and Navarro County. This chapter will give an overview of existing services, research conducted and collected, the public outreach meetings, the transportation poll used to collect individualized input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Ellis County and Navarro County.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES

Community Transit Services (CTS) serves Ellis County and Navarro County with curb-to-curb, demand-response service. This service is intended for the general public and persons with special needs, as specified by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The service operates Monday – Saturday, 5:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.. CTS will take reservations Monday – Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.. CTS requires 48 hours' notice

for scheduling a ride, and all vehicles are ADA accessible. Travel within a hub city begins at $2 per one-way stop with a bus pass (which costs $10), $4 without a bus pass. Travel within one county is $5 per stop. Travel between Ellis and Navarro counties is $1 per mile.

In addition to other transportation options and services, Trinity Metro operates a commuter vanpool program within the North Central Texas region. As of May 2022, Trinity Metro operated up to 9 vanpools with origins in Ellis County. The number of vanpools may change month to month as the regional program expands shared commuter transportation opportunities.

Finally, see Appendix B 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). Organizations can also contract with them to provide specific services for clients.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The population of Ellis County increased 10.6% between 2015 and 2019 according to the five-year American Community Survey estimates, while the population of Navarro County grew 1.8%. Combined, the populations of both counties grew

Ellis County
Percentage of Population 65+
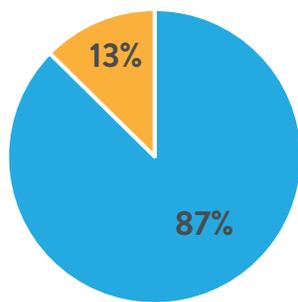
- Under 65 Population
- 65 and Over Population

### Navarro County
Percentage of Population 65+
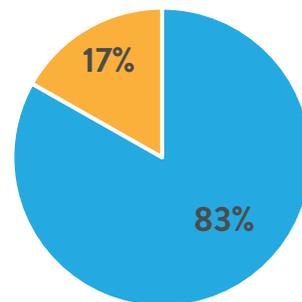
- Under 65 Population
- 65 and Over Population

Percentage of Individuals with a Disability in Ellis County
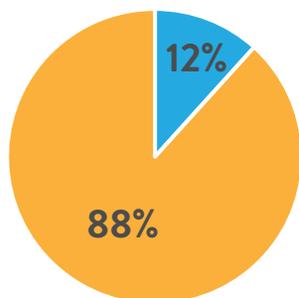
- ■ Percent of Individuals with a Disability
- ■ Percent of Individuals without a Disability

Percentage of Individuals with a Disability in Navarro County
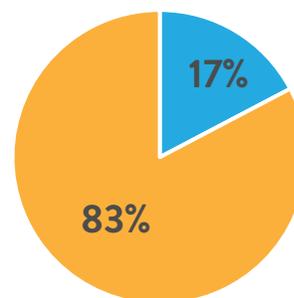
- ■ Percent of Individuals with a Disability
- ■ Percent of Individuals without a Disability

8.6%. The region grew 8.0%; this indicates that both counties are continuing to add residents and will likely add more in the years to come as the region continues experiencing growth.

One area of focus for the Access North Texas plan has been the population of limited English proficiency (LEP) individuals. About 6.6% of the population in Ellis County is considered LEP, while 10.4% of Navarro County's population is listed as LEP. These are lower than the regional percentage of 13.2% and suggest that outreach efforts in languages other than English would be more impactful in Navarro County.

In reviewing demographic data for the region, particular attention is given to groups that tend to be more reliant on public transportation services. One such group is the population aged 65 and older. Per our demographic data, Navarro County has a slightly larger share of elderly residents compared with Ellis County. Both counties are above the regional percentage of 11.2% of individuals over age 65.

For individuals with disabilities, reliable access to public transportation means improved mobility and accessibility to medical appointments and everyday travel needs. While some individuals with disabilities have full mobility, special consideration should be made for accessibility in

any public transportation service being proposed for the county. Outreach to populations with disabilities should determine what opportunities and services are unavailable to them due to challenges in securing reliable transportation.

About 12% of the population in Ellis County is identified as having a disability, and 17% of the population in Navarro County is identified as having a disability. The regional percentage is 9.5%, suggesting that particular attention be given to transportation needs for individuals with disabilities.

Additionally, low-income individuals often face greater challenges in mobility. Our demographic data indicates that Ellis County has a lower percentage of the population considered low-income compared to the region, while Navarro County exceeds the regional percentage (16.1%). Both counties exceed the regional percentage for zero-car households (1.6%), which is surprising given the more rural character of the counties.

PROCESS
Outreach
Public outreach for Ellis County and Navarro County was conducted through a series of virtual public meetings, surveys, and public mapping data. Outreach efforts were advertised through

Ellis County Percentage of Population in Poverty

12%

88%
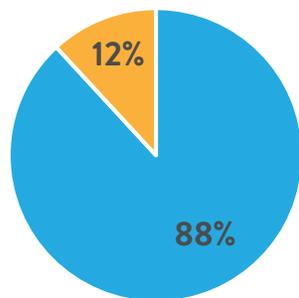
■ Total Non-LI Individuals
■ Total Low-Income Individuals

Navarro County Percentage of Population in Poverty

24%

76%
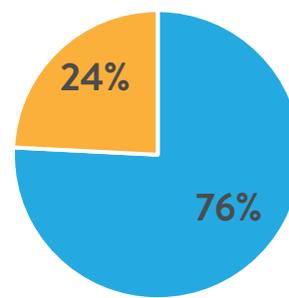
■ Total Non-LI Individuals
■ Total Low-Income Individuals

email invitations, the Access North Texas website, NCTCOG's Local Motion publication, a press release, and social media.

NCTCOG conducted two public meetings conducted over Zoom, and a survey shared by the community partners. Invitations to attend the public meetings, fill out the survey, and share the information about Access North Texas were sent to 85 people. 29 responses were received through all surveys. Thecommunity partners directly survey received ten responses from participants in Ellis County. 18 responses came from the online and paper survey, and one response was received from surveys sent to transit agencies. Three members of the public attended the online public meetings, including representatives from Community Services, Inc. (operator of Community Transit Services).

Data Sources
The planning process for Access North Texas involved NCTCOG staff, community stakeholders, transportation providers, and community members. Through virtual meetings, members from each county prioritized its main concerns about transit access in their area.

Another form of receiving data from Ellis County and Navarro County residents and stakeholders

was a transportation survey; made available online and translated into English and Spanish. Due to COVID-19 limitations, paper copies were available upon request or through transportation partners. The survey helped NCTCOG staff to collect first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations.

All information gained through outreach meetings and transportation survey was gathered to develop the prioritized strategies for Ellis County and Navarro County.

TAIT Tool and Environmental Justice
The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) identifies communities who face transportation disadvantages and may have greater potential need for public transit. This tool is updated by the North Central Texas Council of Governments and is based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Based on information from TAIT, in Ellis County there are over a dozen census block groups where populations of individuals age 65 and over, below poverty, and with disabilities are above the regional percentages. In Navarro County, every census block group is above the regional percentage for at least one of the three groups.

Percent Zero-Car Households in Ellis County
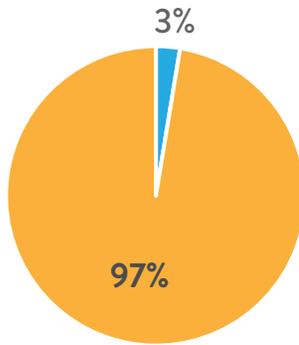
3%

97%

- ■ Percent of Individuals with a Disability
- ■ Percent of Individuals without a Disability

Percent Zero-Car Households in Navarro County

6%

94%
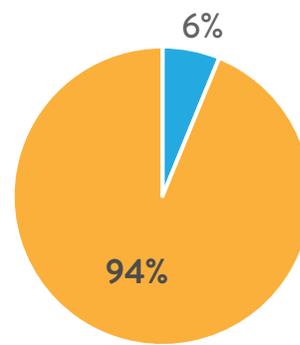
- ■ Percent of Individuals with a Disability
- ■ Percent of Individuals without a Disability

Analysis

Within Ellis County, the census block groups with all three categories above the regional average mainly cluster in central Ellis County (in and around Waxahachie) and southwest Ellis County around the I-35E and US-287 corridors. For two-category block groups, most have a greater proportion of people with disabilities and seniors aged 65 and older. The areas with only one group above the regional average tend to have a greater proportion of individuals with disabilities. These areas are distributed throughout the county.

While the majority of Ellis County has a low percentage of zero-car households, there are a handful of census block groups where the percentage exceeds the regional rate. These groups are in central, northern, and southwestern Ellis County, including the cities of Waxahachie, Ennis, and the unincorporated areas between Pecan Hill and Palmer.

In Navarro County, the majority of census block groups exceed the regional rates for all three characteristics. The only block groups with one or two characteristics above the regional rates are concentrated in Corsicana and Retreat, and eastern Navarro County roughly bounded by State Highway 31 and US-287.

Zero-car households exceed the regional average near Corsicana and within the south / southwestern portion of Navarro County in an area roughly bounded by I-45 and State Highway 31.

Development of Strategies

The prioritized strategies were developed once information from outreach meetings, the transportation poll, and research data was compiled and analyzed for patterns and gaps of service. Observations and recommendations were coded into five (5) main categories to identify themes across the 16-county region and inform regional goals. Those goals provide a framework for Access North Texas and individual strategies were identified for Ellis and Navarro Counties to further those goals and provide a plan for transit providers and organizations in future implementation of services. Drafted goals and strategies were provided to the stakeholders for additional feedback and review prior to the finalization of the plan.

FINDINGS

Per the results of the Access North Texas survey, while most respondents did not report missing any trips due to a lack of transportation, those who

Ellis County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)
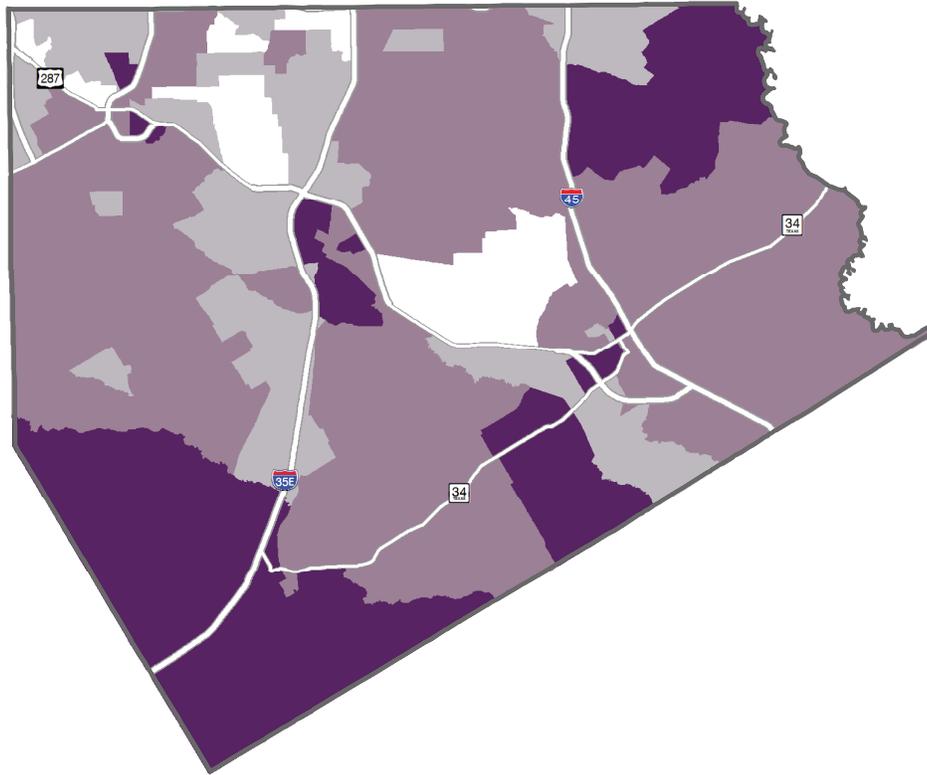
Legend

All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage

One Variable Above Regional Percentage

Two Variables Above Regional Percentage

All Variables Above Regional Percentage

08   16 Miles

N

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening 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.

Navarro County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)
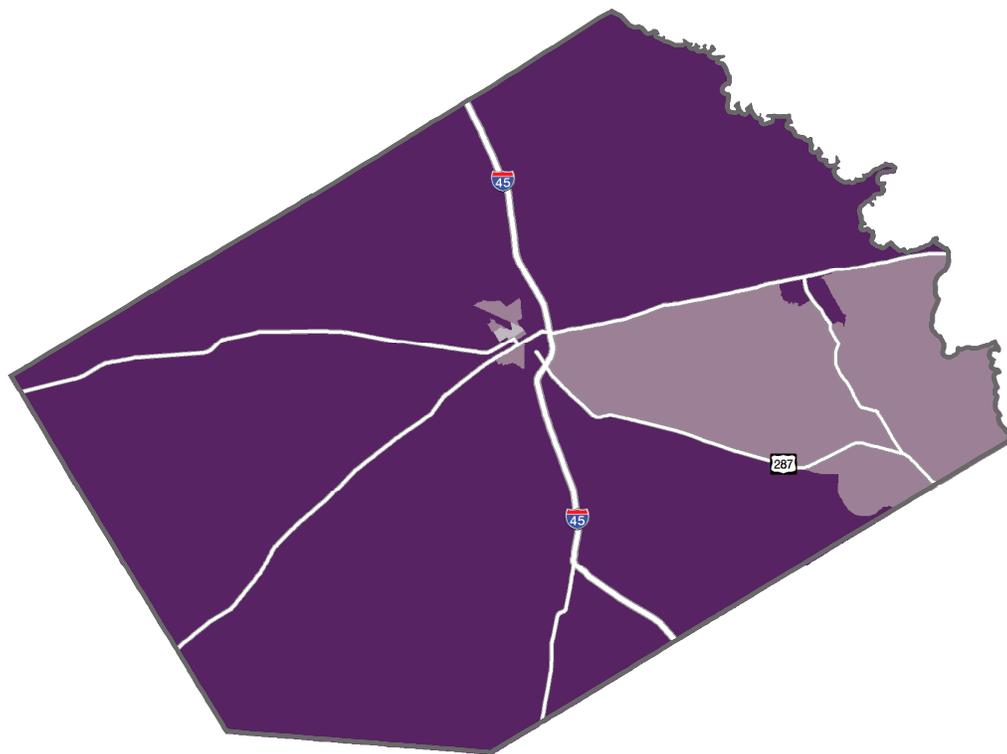
Legend

All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage

One Variable Above Regional Percentage

Two Variables Above Regional Percentage

All Variables Above Regional Percentage

N

09   18 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening 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.

did miss trips reported medical visits as the most common type of trip missed. Reported barriers to mobility included a lack of car or anybody who can drive the respondent, and that the available options do not meet respondents' needs.

The three enhancements most desired by respondents include transit service frequency, service areas, and service times. According to feedback received from the public, a challenge that the population in the counties face is access to different types of trips. Existing services do not go into Dallas County for medical trips and provide limited service for other types of trips (such as going to a courthouse or grocery store). Other concerns include the cost of travel with existing transit services, especially among populations that do not qualify for Medicaid or Title IIIB trips.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The goals and strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders identified as needing to be implemented over the next few years. The strategies build upon the progress and feedback

Ellis and Navarro Counties
Reported Missed Trips
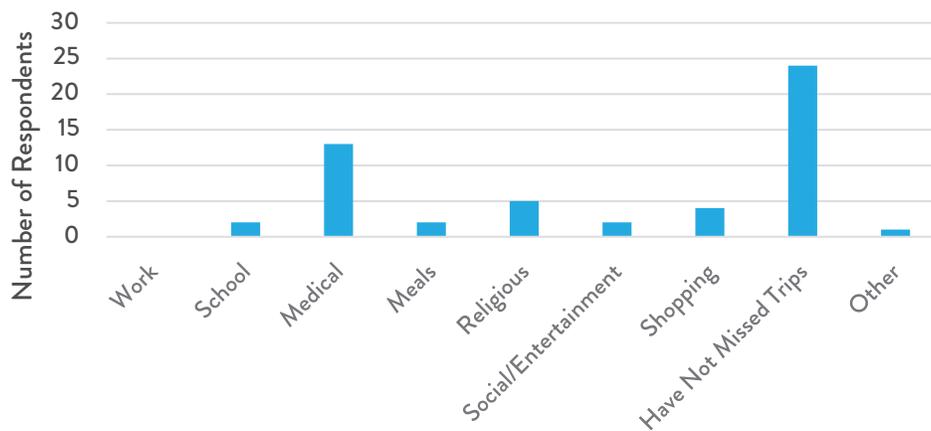
Ellis and Navarro Counties
Reported Barriers to Mobility
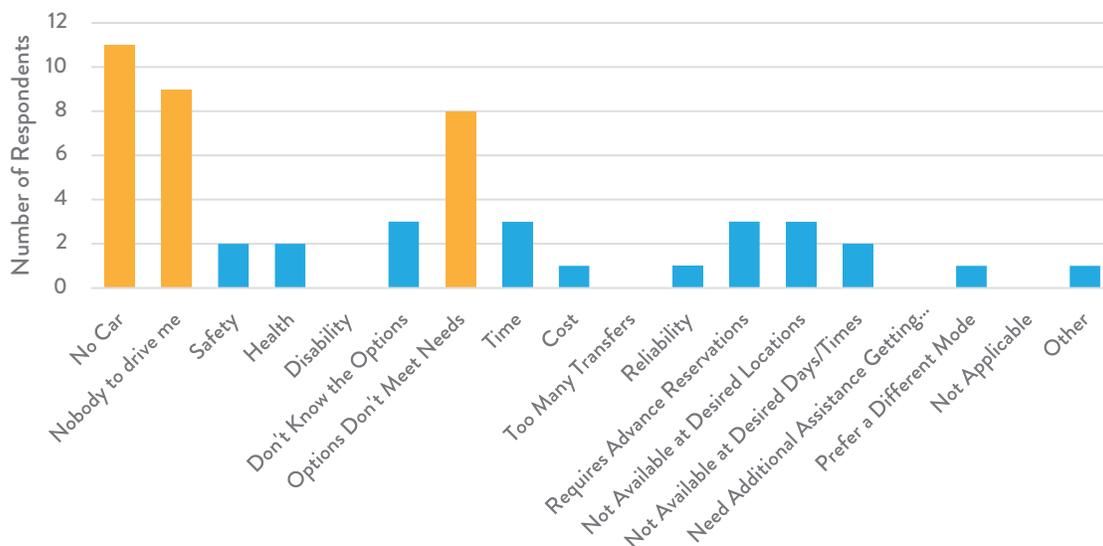
| REGIONAL GOAL	ELLIS AND NAVARRO COUNTY-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES
Plan and Develop Transportation Options by Assessing Community Need and Challenges	A) Invest in programs that facilitate transportation trips to medical and healthcare appointments
Implement Services by Enhancing Transportation Options and Expanding Where Service Gaps Exist	A) Improve existing public transportation options to better fit the needs of riders and households with 1 or zero cars by increasing service frequency and availability B) Expand public transportation services to key destinations throughout the region without comprehensive service and support regional integration of new services. C) Establish additional assistance or more specialized public transportation options for customers who are not ADA paratransit eligible or physically capable of utilizing regular public transportation services
Coordinate with Transportation Providers, Public Agencies, and Stakeholders to Increase Efficiencies	A) Work with regional and local organizations to increase ease of travel across municipal and county boundaries B) Develop partnerships across transportation providers to improve access to trips in the evening and weekends
Support Public Transportation Recovery and Growth	A) Promote safe and healthy practices on public transportation services
Promote Access and Information about Available Transportation Options	A) Enhance communication and outreach programs to improve awareness of existing or new transportation options. B) Conduct travel training to educate the public on available services and policies

Desired Transportation Enhancements in Ellis and Navarro Counties

that has been provided since the 2018 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Implementing the Plan

Agencies and organizations looking to develop transit projects aligned with these strategies may find support through NCTCOG's Transit Strategic Partnerships Program or the TxDOT Call for Projects. Competitive proposals will demonstrate innovative solutions, strategic value, sustainability, implementation capacity, and evidence of collaboration. Most importantly, the proposal's needs assessment will need to be supported directly by county specific strategies identified in this plan. The most competitive proposals will demonstrate how the proposed project or service will utilize one or more strategies to enhance transit accessibility for transit-dependent populations. More information on the Transit Strategic Partnerships Program can be found at **www.nctcog.org/strategicpartnerships-transit**. More information on the TxDOT Call for Projects can be found at **www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/public-transportation/local-assistance.html.**

REFERENCE TO THE APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Ellis and Navarro Counties, please see Appendices A-E, available online at www.accessnorthtexas.org.

See Appendix A, Summary & Status of 2018 to review previously adopted goals and strategies that were included in the 2018 Access North Texas plan.

See Appendix B, Get-A-Ride Guide, for a list of public and private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These providers are an additional transportation resource that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix C, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed and how to use it.

See Appendix D, Data & Analysis, for copies of the transportation surveys, statistics, and affiliated county-based maps.

See Appendix E, Outreach Meeting and Supplemental Information, for a list of previously held virtual meetings by county with a copy of the presentations.

ERATH, HOOD, AND SOMERVELL COUNTIES

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to document the public transportation needs 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. This chapter will give an overview of existing services, research conducted and collected, the public outreach meetings, the transportation poll used to collect individualized input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Hood County.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES

The Transit System, Inc. (TTS) serves as a rural transit district for Hood and Somervell Counties. TTS operates demand-response service for the public throughout their service area and allows trips outside the service area. TTS also operates non-emergency medical transportation service under a contract with LogistiCare and other local agencies. Reservations are required a day in advance of travel. Fares vary from $6 to $12 based on counties and zones. Additional fares include a Wait Time fare of $25 per hour and Before/After Hour fare of $50 per hour.

Texas Kidney Health Care (TKHC) Program, a statewide program that helps Texans with end-stage renal disease pay for their treatment, including travel to transplant or dialysis services. Program eligibility is required to access the service. Applications can be submitted through participating outpatient dialysis facilities, hospitals, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), or a social worker.

Trinity Metro Vanpool service is intended for workplace commuters who live in an area not served by Trinity Metro rail or bus. As of May 2022, there are two vanpools operating in Erath County and one vanpool in Hood County. Vans may use HOV lanes and are available to the driver seven days a week.

VA North Texas Health Care System Travel Benefits Program provides eligible Veterans and other beneficiaries with mileage reimbursement when utilizing plane, train, bus, taxi, light rail (common carrier) or when medically indicated, "special mode" (ambulance, wheelchair van) transport for travel to and from VA health care, or VA authorized non-VA health care for which the Veteran is eligible. Applications for travel reimbursements must be submitted within 30 calendar days from the date travel is completed.

Veterans Transportation Service (VTS) is designed to ensure that all qualifying Veterans have access to care through convenient, safe, and reliable transportation. VTS provides qualifying Veterans with free transportation services to and/or from participating VA medical centers (Va.m.Cs) in a multi-passenger van. This service ensures that all qualifying Veterans who do not have access to transportation options of their own, due to financial, medical, or other reasons, are able to travel to VA medical facilities or authorized non-VA appointments to receive care.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS : ERATH COUNTY

Demographic data in Erath County was analyzed to identify populations in particular need of public transportation. According to the American Community Survey's 2019 5-year estimates, Erath County's population has increased 5% to 41,841 since 2015. In comparison, the Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan area grew by 8% in the same period. As the county and region continue to grow, alternatives to traveling by car will be needed to reduce congestion and emissions.

Erath County Percentage of Population in Poverty

- **Total Non-LI Individuals** (77%)
- **Total Low-Income Individuals** (23%)

Erath County Percentage of Population 65+

- **Under 65 Population** (86%)
- **65 and Over Population** (14%)
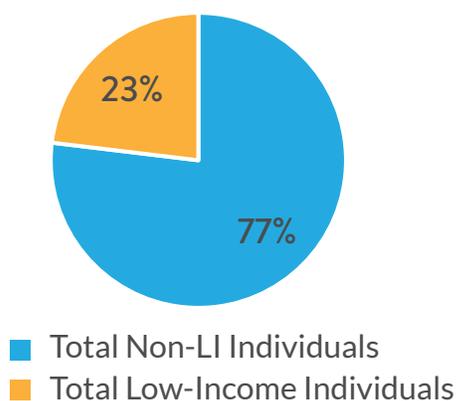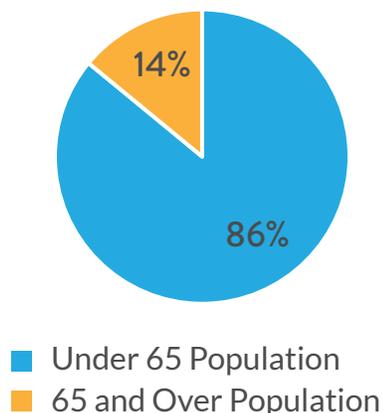
Within Erath County, 4.5% of the population is considered to be of limited English proficiency. This is lower than the regional percentage, but promotional efforts for existing and new services should be inclusive of limited English proficiency population.

In Erath County, 23% of the population was recorded as low-income. These populations may have less reliable access to personal automobile transportation. Efforts should be made to identify geographies within Erath County which have larger concentrations of poverty and determine if they are currently served by existing transit services.

Additionally, 14% of the population in Erath County are age 65 and over. While some individuals who are 65 and over have full mobility, special consideration should be made for accessibility in any public transportation service being proposed for the county. Outreach to this population should determine what opportunities and services are accessible as well as what challenges prevent individuals from securing reliable transportation.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS: HOOD COUNTY

Demographic data in Hood County was analyzed to identify populations in particular need of public transportation. According to the American Community Survey's 2019 5-year estimates, Hood County's population has increased 10% to 58,318 since 2015. In comparison, the Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan area grew by 8% in the same period. As the county and region continue to grow, alternatives to traveling by car will be needed to reduce congestion and emissions.

Within Hood County, 4.3% of the population is considered to have limited English proficiency. This is lower than the regional percentage, but promotional efforts for existing and new services should be inclusive of limited English proficiency population.

In Hood County, 13% of the population was recorded as low-income. These populations may have less reliable access to personal automobile transportation. Efforts should be made to identify geographies within Hood County which have larger concentrations of poverty and determine if they are currently served by existing transit services.

Hood County Percentage of Population in Poverty

- 13%
- 87%
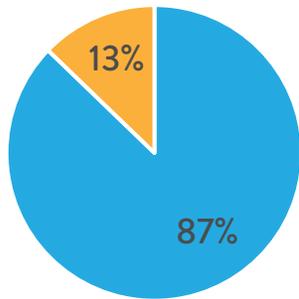
■ Total Non-LI Individuals
■ Total Low-Income Individuals

Hood County Percentage of Population 65+

- 25%
- 75%
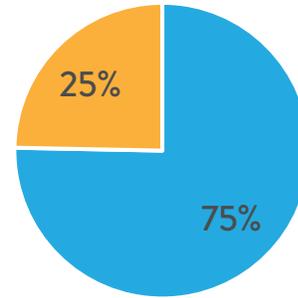
■ Under 65 Population
■ 65 and Over Population

Additionally, 25% of the population in Hood County are 65 and over. While some individuals who are 65 and over have full mobility, special consideration should be made for accessibility in any public transportation service being proposed for the county. Outreach to this population should determine what opportunities and services are accessible as well as what challenges prevent individuals from securing reliable transportation.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS: SOMERVELL COUNTY

Demographic data in Somervell County was analyzed to identify populations in particular need of public transportation. According to the American Community Survey's 2019 5-year estimates, Somervell County's population has increased 3% to 8,860 since 2015. In comparison, the Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan area grew by 8% in the same period. As the county and region continue to grow, alternatives to traveling by car will be needed to reduce congestion and emissions.

Within Somervell County, 4% of the population is considered of limited English proficiency. This is lower than the regional percentage, but promotional efforts for existing and new services should be inclusive of limited English proficiency population.

In Somervell County, 25% of the population was recorded as low-income. These populations may have less reliable access to personal automobile transportation. Efforts should be made to identify geographies within Somervell County which have larger concentrations of poverty and determine if they are currently served by existing transit services.

Additionally, 18% of the population in Somervell County are 65 and over. While some individuals who are 65 and over have full mobility, special consideration should be made for accessibility in any public transportation service being proposed for the county. Outreach to this population should determine what opportunities and services are accessible as well as what challenges prevent individuals from securing reliable transportation.

PROCESS
Outreach
Public outreach for Erath, Hood and Somervell County was conducted through a series of virtual public meetings, surveys, and public mapping data. Outreach efforts were advertised through email invitations, the Access North Texas website, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Local Motion publication, a press release, and social media.

Somervell County Percentage of Population in Poverty

25%

75%

- ■ Total Non-LI Individuals
- ■ Total Low-Income Individuals

Somervell County Percentage of Population 65+

18%

82%

- ■ Under 65 Population
- ■ 65 and Over Population
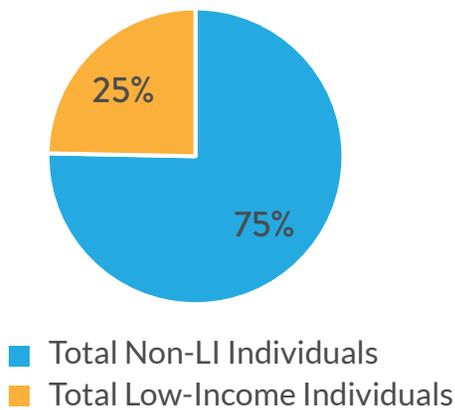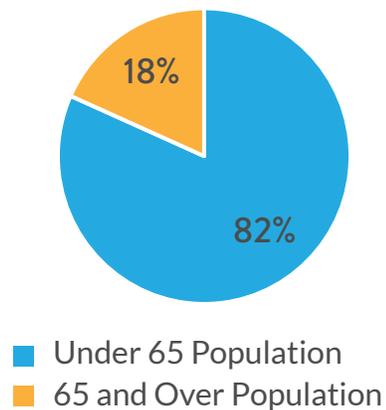
NCTCOG conducted two virtual public meetings in Erath, Hood and Somervell Counties. Invitations to the public meetings were shared with 78 people. Five members of the public/stakeholders attended a meeting, including local government, and human services organizations. A total of 59 survey responses were received.

Data Sources

The planning process for Access North Texas involved NCTCOG staff, community stakeholders, transportation providers, and community members. Through virtual meetings, members from each county prioritized its main concerns about transit access in their area.

Another form of receiving data from Erath, Hood and Somervell County residents and stakeholders was a transportation survey; made available online in both English and Spanish. Due to COVID-19 limitations, paper copies were available upon request or through transportation partners. The survey helped NCTCOG staff to collect first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations.

All information gained through outreach meetings and the transportation survey was gathered to

help develop the prioritized strategies for Erath, Hood and Somervell Counties.

TAIT Tool and Environmental Justice

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) identifies communities who face transportation disadvantages and may have greater potential need for public transit. This tool is updated by the North Central Texas Council of Governments and is based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Based on information from TAIT, Erath, Hood and Somervell Counties have census block groups where populations of individuals are age 65 and over, below poverty, and with disabilities are above the regional percentages.

Analysis

In Erath County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals aged 65 and older, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentage. There are three primary concentration areas where all variables are above the regional percentage. This includes areas east, south, and west of Stephenville. From east to west, the first concentration of all variables being above the regional percentage is near the surrounding area

Erath County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)
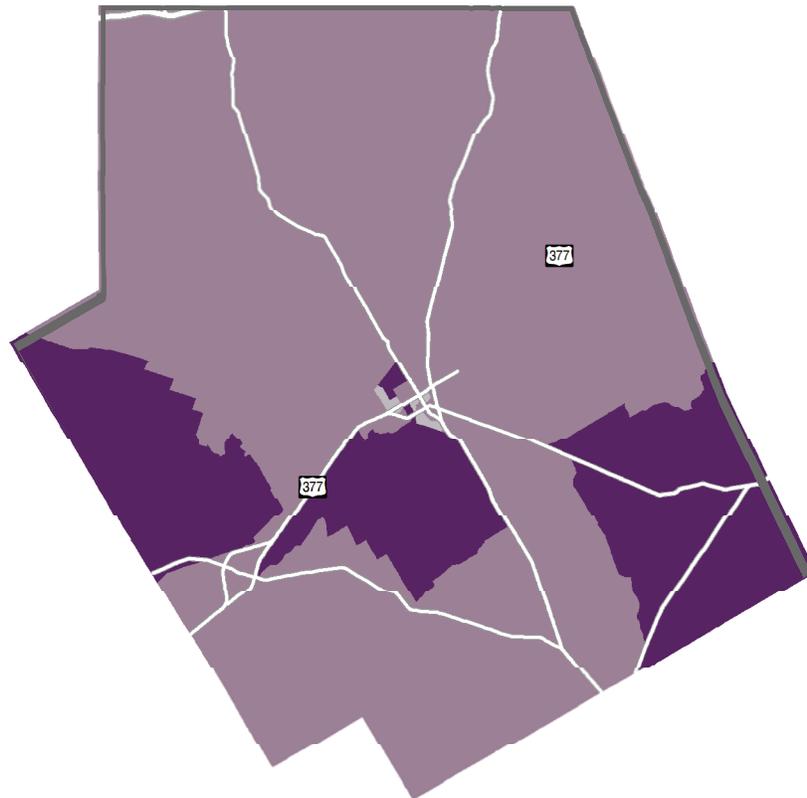
Legend

All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage

One Variable Above Regional Percentage

Two Variables Above Regional Percentage

All Variables Above Regional Percentage

09   .5   19 Miles

N

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening 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.

Hood and Somervell Counties Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)
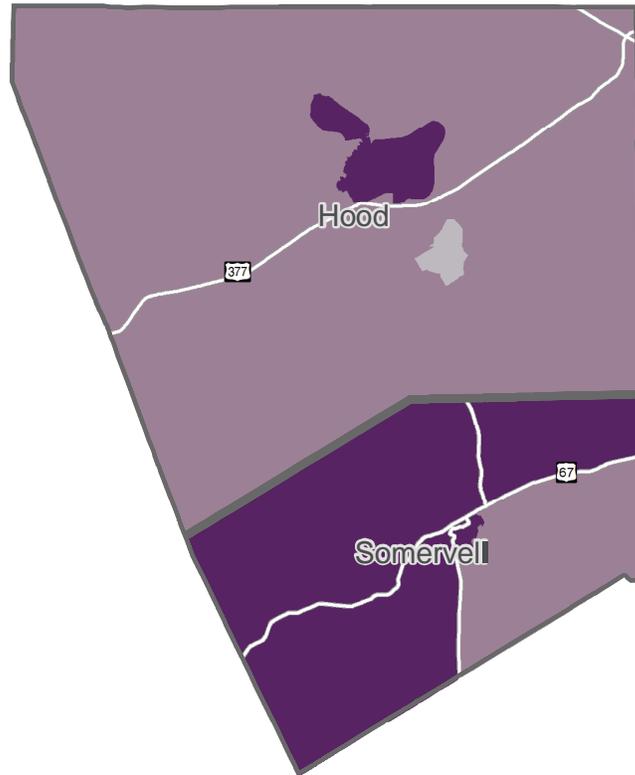
Legend

All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage

One Variable Above Regional Percentage

Two Variables Above Regional Percentage

All Variables Above Regional Percentage

07   .5   15 Miles

N

**Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates**

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening 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.

of US 67 and SH 220 on the southeastern side of the county. The second concentration is directly south of Stephenville, between US 377 and US 281. The third is northwest of the City of Dublin and west of US 377. This also includes a small area directly northwest of Stephenville. The remaining area within the county exhibits at least two variables above the regional percentage.

In Hood County, there are census block groups where the population of individuals are age 65 and older, below the poverty line, and with disabilities is above the regional percentage. The area with all three variables above regional percentage is in northern Hood County, just north of US 377. Municipalities in the three-variable block groups include Granbury, Oak Trail Shores and Brazos Bend. There is one small area with one-variable census block group to the southeast of US 377. The rest of the county is above the regional percentage for two-variable census block groups.

In Somervell County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals are age 65 and older, below the poverty line, and with disabilities is above the regional percentage. The majority of Somervell County has all three variables above the regional percentage, including all areas north of

US 67, as well as the southwest portion of the county between US 67 and SH 144. The area with two variables above regional percentages is in the southeast Somervell County, between US 67 and SH 144.

Development of Strategies
The prioritized strategies were developed once information from outreach meetings, the transportation poll, and research data was compiled and analyzed for patterns and gaps of service. Observations and recommendations were coded into six (6) main categories to identify themes across the 16-county region and inform regional goals. Those goals provide

a framework for the Access North Texas and individual strategies were identified for Erath, Hood and Somervell Counties to further those goals and provide a plan for transit providers and organizations in future implementation of services. Drafted goals and strategies were provided to the stakeholders for additional feedback and review prior to the finalization of the plan.

FINDINGS
In Erath, Hood, and Somervell Counties, 59 people completed the Access North Texas survey. More than 50% of the respondents would like to be better informed on how to use transit as well as the other available transit options. All respondents would like expanded service areas and service hours. Another area of focus for those respondents was health and sanitation while riding transit.

RECOMMENDATIONS
The goals and strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders identified as needing to be implemented over the next few years. The strategies build upon the progress and feedback that has been provided since the 2018 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Implementing the Plan
Agencies and organizations looking to develop transit solutions aligned with these strategies may find support through the **Transit Strategic Partnerships Program.** Through this program, NCTCOG regularly accepts proposals for funding innovative transit projects in the region. Proposals are evaluated based on a comprehensive needs assessment, strategic value, sustainability, implementation capacity, and evidence of collaboration. Most importantly, the needs assessment will need to be supported directly by

REGIONAL GOAL	ERATH, HOOD AND SOMERVELL COUNTY-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES
Plan and Develop Transportation Options by Assessing Community Need and Challenges	A) Conduct planning activities to further identify public transportation needs of residents outside of the existing transportation authorities and define additional coordination opportunities for existing providers
Implement Services by Enhancing Transportation Options and Expanding Where Service Gaps Exist	A) Expand public transportation services to key destinations throughout the region – work, medical appointments, religious services, and social/entertainment needs
Coordinate with Transportation Providers, Public Agencies, and Stakeholders to Increase Efficiencies	A) Work with regional and local organizations to increase ease of travel across municipal and county boundaries
Support Public Transportation Recovery and Growth	A) Promote safe and healthy practices on public transportation services
Promote Access and Information about Available Transportation Options	A) Enhance education and outreach programs to improve awareness of existing or new transportation options. B) Conduct travel training to educate the public on available services and policies

county specific strategies identified in this plan. The most competitive proposals will demonstrate how the proposed project or service will utilize one or more strategies to enhance transit accessibility for transit-dependent populations. More information on the program can be found at **www.nctcog.org/strategicpartnerships-transit**.

REFERENCE TO THE APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Ellis and Navarro Counties, please see appendices A-E, available online at **www.accessnorthtexas.org**.

See Appendix A, Summary & Status of 2018 to review previously adopted goals and strategies that were included in the 2018 Access North Texas plan.

See Appendix B, Get-A-Ride Guide, for a list of public and private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These providers are an additional transportation resource that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix C, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed and how to use it.

See Appendix D, Data & Analysis, for copies of the transportation surveys, statistics, and affiliated county-based maps.

See Appendix E, Outreach Meeting and Supplemental Information, for a list of previously held virtual meetings by county with a copy of the presentations.

HUNT COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to document the public transportation needs for seniors, 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 existing services, research conducted and collected, the public outreach meetings, the transportation poll used to collect individualized input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Hunt County.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES

The Connection, operated by Senior Center Resources and Public Transit (SCRPT) is the primary public transportation provider in Hunt County. The Connection serves the general public, including seniors, individuals with disabilities and people identifying as low-income. Reservation-based demand response public transportation service operates from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm Monday through Friday. Reservations may be made during office hours of 8:00 am to 3:30 pm on weekdays. The Connection also offers limited Park & Ride shuttle routes from Greenville to the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) station in downtown Rowlett. Shuttles run twice in the morning and in the afternoon to provide trips to the DART station, offering connections to DART trains and buses.

As of early 2022, For demand response services, a round trip fare within the same community or city is $4.00, or $2.00 one way. Within the same county, a round trip fare is $6.00, or $3.00 one way. For transportation to Dallas from within Hunt County, the round-trip fare is $34.00 with a minimum of 3 passengers. Seniors and individuals with disabilities may qualify for subsidized or

discounted services. For the shuttle service from Greenville to the Rowlett DART Station, the round-trip fare is $20.00 and if the rider is over 60, they qualify for a reduced roundtrip rate of $10.00. For Hunt County residents who are 60 and over, transportation options to specific destinations are provided at no charge. Destinations include hospitals, local doctors' offices, pharmacies, grocery stores and senior centers. Other destinations follow the same fee schedule as public transportation. Medical transportation is also provided through the title XIX Medicaid Program. The medical transportation service serves pre-authorized individuals by Medicaid Central Dispatch in Arlington, Texas. This service offers medical transportation within "The Connection" service area in Hunt County and provides limited medical transportation from Hunt to Dallas County as needed. Reservations are needed for the medical transportation service.

In addition to other transportation options and services, the Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) operates a commuter vanpool program within the North Central Texas region. As of May 2022, DCTA operated up to 4 vanpools with origins in Hunt County and 5 vanpools with destinations in Hunt County. Trinity Metro, another transit agency within the region, also operated up to 3 vanpools with destinations in Hunt County. The number of vanpools may change month to month as the program expands offering shared commuter transportation opportunities.

Finally, see Appendix B, for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers offer additional transportation options that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific services for clients.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Demographic data in Hunt County was used to identify populations that may have a high potential need for public transportation. The population of Hunt County has increased by 6.9% between 2015 and 2019, which is less than the 16-county regional growth of 8.0% in that same time-period. In accordance with ACS 2019 5-year estimate data, Hunt County currently has a total population of 94,162 people with a total of 33,189 households. As the population continues to grow, transportation options will need to adapt to meet the needs of an ageing and diverse population.

Of the total population of Hunt County, 14,886 people are aged 65 and over, which is 15.8% of the population and higher than the regional percentage of 11.1%. Hunt County also includes 14,384 people who identify as having a disability, which is 15.3% of the total population and higher than the regional percentage of 9.5%. In addition, Hunt County has 19,885 people who identify as

low-income, which is 21.8% of the total population and higher than the regional percentage of 16%.

Hunt County's racial composition is majority white at 71.6%. The second largest majority within the county is Hispanics at 16.4% of the total population. From a regional perspective, Hunt county's white population is comparable to the regions overall 68.8% while the county Hispanic population is lower than the regional percentage of 28.7%. Overall, 3.9% of residents speak English less than very well. This is less than the regional 13.2% who have limited English proficiency. Additionally, in Hunt County, 6.1% of total households do not possess a car. The higher percentage of households not possessing a car are focused west of Greenville between US-380 and US-67, the Commerce area, and near Quinlan along TX-34. The overall percentage of zero-car households in Hunt County exceeds the 1.6% of zero-car households across the region. With a higher percentage of zero-car households in

Hunt County Persons with Disabilities

0% - 6%

7% - 10%

11% - 13%

14% - 18%

19% - 26%

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census tract level
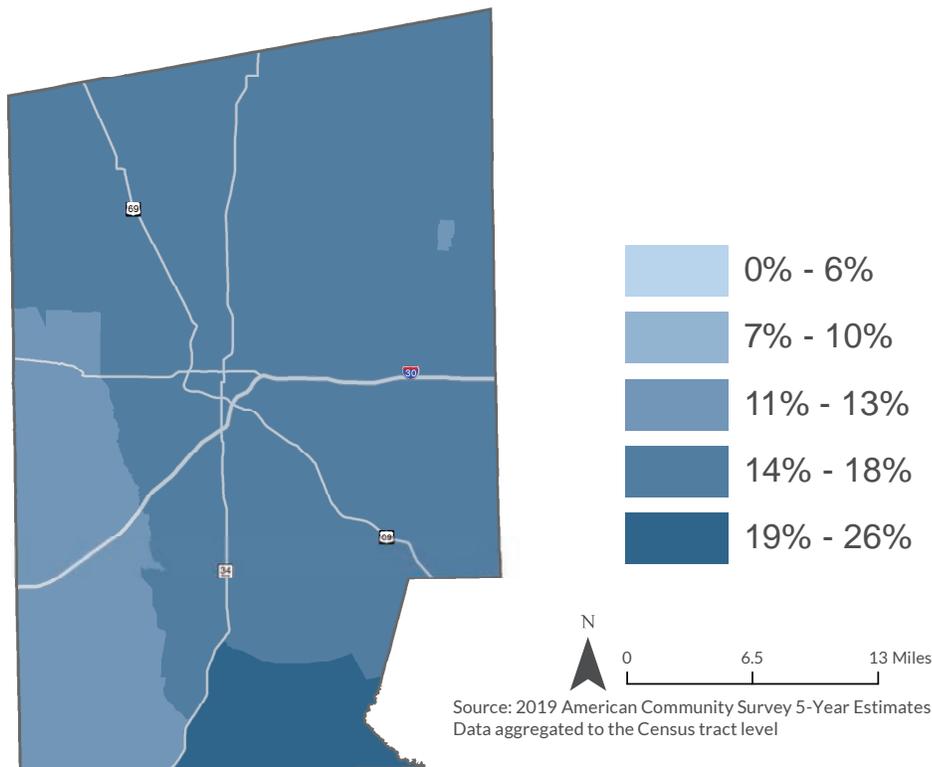
Hunt County than the region, efforts to add and promote transit service opportunities should be included in strategies to reach this population.

PROCESS

Outreach

Public outreach for Hunt County was conducted through a series of virtual public meetings, online surveys, paper surveys on request, and public mapping data. Outreach efforts were advertised through email invitations, the Access North Texas website, a publication in Local Motion, a press release, and social media.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) scheduled two virtual outreach meetings for Hunt County. Email invitations were successfully shared with 62 stakeholders. For the meetings, a total of 7 individuals registered and 4 attended. Attendees included representatives of a local transportation provider, non-profit agency, social service organization, and an institution of higher education.

A transportation survey was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper in English or Spanish. This survey collected input on public transportation in the region. The survey was also available online for organizations and agencies that work with transit-dependent populations. In total, there were 4 responses received for Hunt County. Of these, 1 was from the public and 3 were received from agency and organization representatives.

Data Sources

The planning process for Access North Texas involved North Central Texas Council of Governments staff, community stakeholders, transportation providers, and community members. Through virtual meetings, members from each county prioritized its main concerns about transit access in their area.

In-meeting polling with Hunt County stakeholders highlighted several key concerns such as increasing coordination between agencies, funding

Hunt County Low-Income Individuals

Legend:
- 0% - 9%
- 10% - 21%
- 22% - 34%
- 35% - 51%
- 52% - 100%

N

0   6.5   13 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census block group level
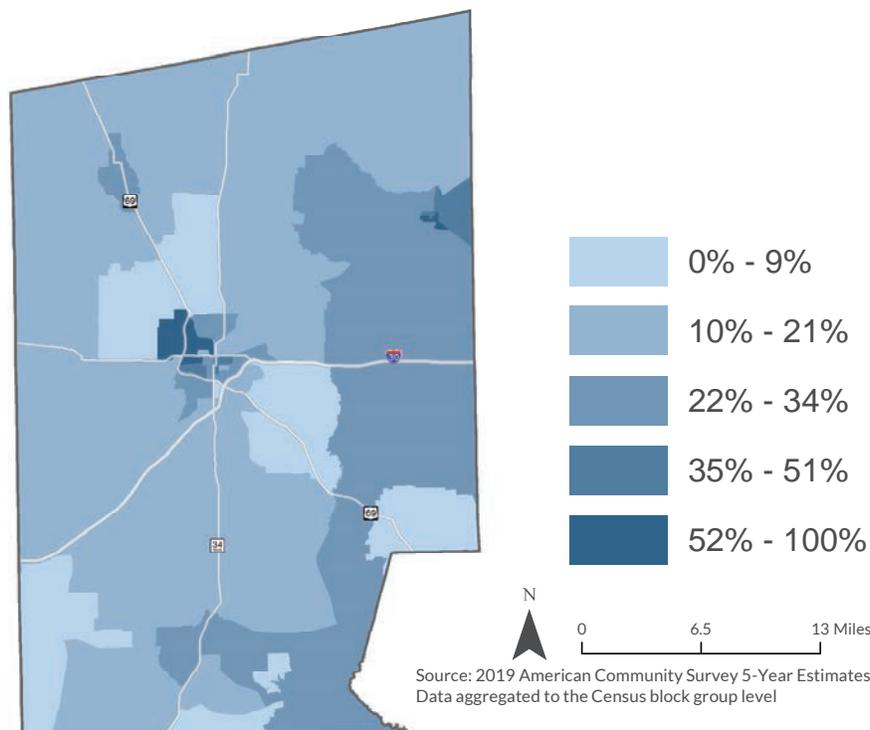
new services, enhancing the user experience, and creating targeted implementation plans. One of the major areas of interest was improving awareness of available services. In accordance with the meeting poll, having a step-by-step implementation for new services would have the greatest impact on transit in the county in regard to targeted implementation plans. Through discussion, stakeholders expressed interest in student transportation options, limited medical appointment options for students with disabilities, after-business-hours transportation options for victims of abuse to safe places, out of county transportation, and overall reliability of current service providers. Staff from the primary transit provider confirmed during the meeting the services they offer and were interested in receiving rider feedback to help improve services. Staff also mentioned that they are working on developing an app for users. All information

gained through outreach meetings helped with the development of regional goals and the prioritized strategies for Hunt County.

Another form of receiving data from residents and stakeholders was a transportation survey; made available online and translated into English and Spanish. Due to COVID-19 limitations, paper copies were available upon request or through transportation partners. The survey helped NCTCOG staff to collect first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations.

TAIT Tool and Environmental Justice
The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) identifies communities who face transportation disadvantages and may have greater potential need for public transit. This tool is updated by the

Hunt County Population Over 65
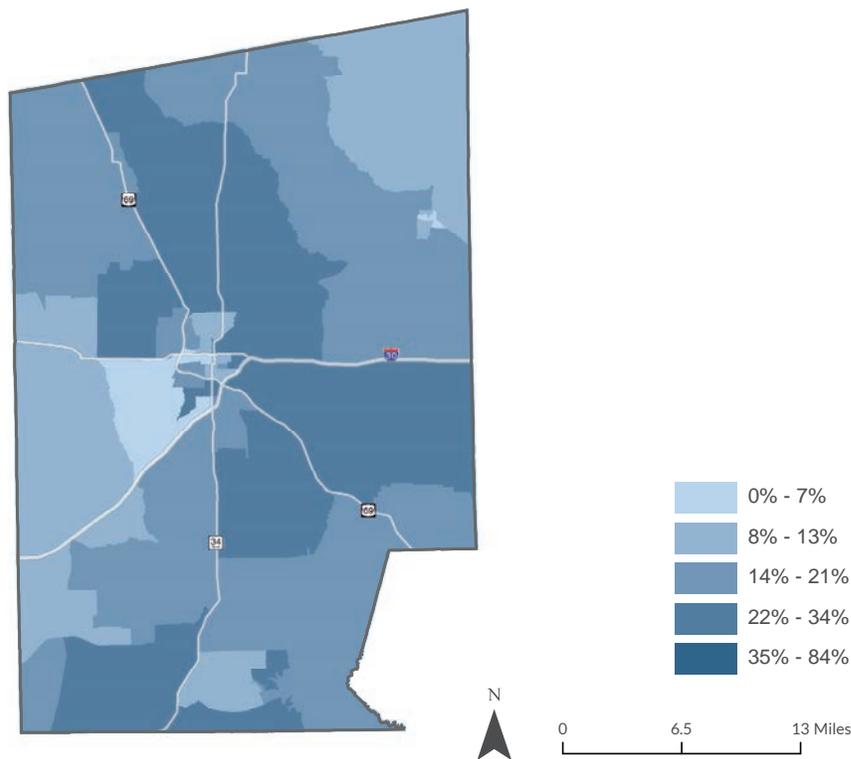
0% - 7%
8% - 13%
14% - 21%
22% - 34%
35% - 84%

N

0   6.5   13 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census block group level

North Central Texas Council of Governments and is based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Based on information from TAIT, Hunt County has a moderately large sized area of census block groups where populations of individuals aged 65 and older, below poverty, and with disabilities are above the regional percentages.

Analysis

The largest census block areas within Hunt County where all three variables are above the regional percentage are mostly along the eastern half of the county. The largest cluster falls within the area northeast of Greenville which includes the surrounding area around Commerce. Other areas with a concentration of all variables being above the regional percentage includes surrounding areas of Quinlan, South of Greenville, and surrounding area of Campbell and I-30 east of

Greenville. Small clusters of one variable above the regional percentage falls east of Royse City on the southern side of US 67, and near Caddo Mills. Overall, the county as a whole is experiencing at least one variable or more as above the regional percentage.

Development of Strategies

The prioritized strategies were developed once information from outreach meetings, the transportation poll, and research data was compiled and analyzed for patterns and gaps of service. Observations and recommendations were coded into five (5) main categories to identify themes across the 16-county region and inform regional goals. Those goals provide a framework for Access North Texas, and individual strategies were identified for Hunt County to further those goals and provide a plan for transit providers and

Hunt County Zero-Car Households
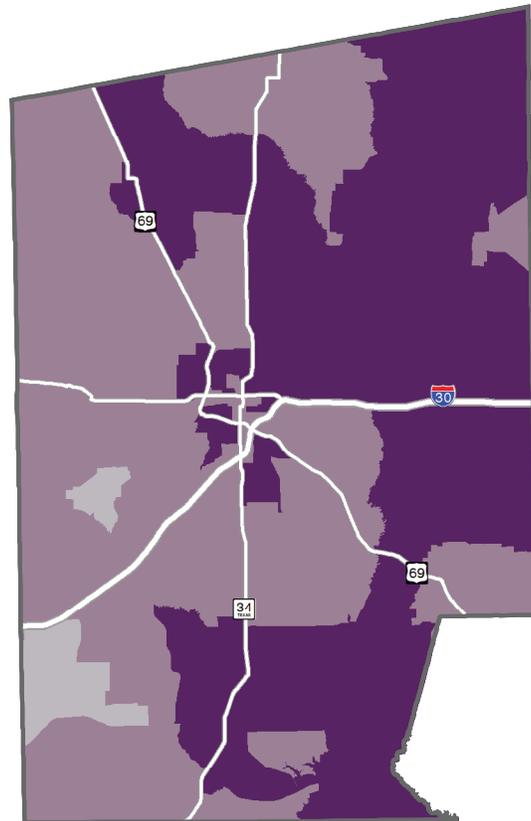
Legend:
- 0% - 3%
- 4% - 9%
- 10% - 18%
- 19% - 30%
- 31% - 65%

N

0   6.5   13 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census block group level

Hunt County Transit
Accesibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

Legend

All Variables At or Below
Regional Percentage

One Variable Above
Regional Percentage

Two Variables Above
Regional Percentage

All Variables Above
Regional Percentage

0   9   18 Miles

N

**Source: 2019 American Community
Survey 5-Year Estimates**

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening 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.

organizations in future implementation of services. Drafted goals and strategies were provided to the stakeholders for additional feedback and review prior to the finalization of the plan.

FINDINGS

In Hunt County, there were 4 total responses (1 public and 3 agency) for the Access North Texas survey submitted to NCTCOG. In combination with the virtual meetings, feedback from meeting participants and survey respondents identified barriers to mobility, missed trips, desired transportation modes and enhancement opportunities. Higher numbers of respondents identified that not knowing the options, service not being available at desired locations, and service not being available on preferred days and times were common barriers. School and medical related missed trips were identified as the most common type of missed trip. Fixed-route bus, Demand-Response, and On-Demand services were identified as the most desired transportation modes. Lastly, the preferred enhancement opportunities were oriented toward expanded service areas and more education and outreach on how to use transit within the county.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The goals and strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders identified as needing to be implemented over the next few years. The strategies build upon the progress and feedback that has been provided since the 2018 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Implementing the Plan

Hunt County has identified transportation in general as an element within its most recently developed thoroughfare plan but has limited information on public transit. In combination with transit services offered by the Senior Center Resources and Public Transit through "The Connection", Hunt County is laying the framework to providing more accessible transit options for county residents.

Agencies and organizations looking to develop transit projects aligned with these strategies may find support through NCTCOG's **Transit Strategic Partnerships Program** or the TxDOT Call for Projects. Competitive proposals will demonstrate

REGIONAL GOAL	HUNT COUNTY-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES
Plan and Develop Transportation Options by Assessing Community Need and Challenges	A) Conduct planning activities to further identify public transportation needs of residents outside of existing transportation authorities and define additional coordination opportunities for existing providers B) Invest in programs that facilitate transportation trips to medical and healthcare appointments C) Launch a mobility toolbox to educate on and promote public transportation options such as fixed route, demand-respond, on-demand services, etc.

REGIONAL GOAL	COUNTY-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES
Implement Services by Enhancing Transportation Options and Expanding Where Service Gaps Exist	A) Improve existing public transportation options to better fit the needs of riders and households with 1 or zero cars by increasing service frequency and availability B) Expand service hours to support needs of low-income individuals in the service industry and outside traditional 9am-5pm jobs C) Expand public transportation services to key destinations throughout the region without comprehensive service and support regional integration of new services
Coordinate with Transportation Providers, Public Agencies, and Stakeholders to Increase Efficiencies	A) Work with regional and local organizations to increase ease of travel across municipal and county boundaries B) Develop partnerships across transportation providers to improve access to trips in the evening and weekends C) Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate, non-traditional ways to deliver and support public transportation, including but not limited to partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, transportation network companies, shared use mobility programs, and volunteer drivers
Support Public Transportation Recovery and Growth	A) Promote safe and healthy practices on public transportation services B) Explore sources of local revenue for public transportation through partnerships, sponsorships, and contracting for service C) Advocate to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase availability of affordable public transportation options
Promote Access and Information about Available Transportation Options	A) Enhance communication and outreach programs to improve awareness of existing or new transportation options B) Conduct travel training to educate the public on available services and policies C) Partner with agencies, recreation centers, senior residencies, housing assisted living centers, and other organizations to publicize information

innovative solutions, strategic value, sustainability, implementation capacity, and evidence of collaboration. Most importantly, the proposal's needs assessment will need to be supported directly by county specific strategies identified in this plan. The most competitive proposals will demonstrate how the proposed project or service will utilize one or more strategies to enhance transit accessibility for transit-dependent populations. More information on the Transit Strategic Partnerships Program can be found at **www.nctcog.org/strategicpartnerships-transit**. More information on the TxDOT Call for Projects can be found at **www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/public-transportation/local-assistance.html**

REFERENCE TO THE APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Hunt County, please see Appendices A-E, available online at **www.accessnorthtexas.org**.

See Appendix A, Summary & Status of 2018 to review previously adopted goals and strategies that were included in the 2018 Access North Texas plan.

See Appendix B, Get-A-Ride Guide, for a list of public and private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These providers are an additional transportation resource that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix C, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed and how to use it.

See Appendix D, Data & Analysis, for copies of the transportation surveys, statistics, and affiliated county-based maps.

See Appendix E, Outreach Meeting and Supplemental Information, for a list of previously held virtual meetings by county with a copy of the presentations.

JOHNSON COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to document the public transportation needs for seniors, 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 existing services, research conducted and collected, the public outreach meetings, the transportation poll used to collect individualized input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Johnson County.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES

Johnson County's designated public transportation provider is City/County Transportation, which is provided through the City of Cleburne. City/County Transportation provides demand-response, curb-to-curb transportation service throughout Johnson County, as well as a commuter bus route into downtown Fort Worth. City/County Transportation provides transportation services throughout Johnson County with all trips originating and ending within the county, with the exception of service to Texas Health Huguley Hospital, and the portion of Burleson that lies outside of county lines. City/County Transportation's demand-response services are available to the general public, though they primarily serve seniors and individuals with disabilities, while the commuter bus service typically serves the general population and low-income individuals.

Services are available from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday and 8:00 am to 5:00 pm on Saturday with no service available on Sunday. Riders must book rides at least one day in advance. Transit services cost $3.00 per trip within same-city limits and travel outside of the city limits and the cost between cities is $3.00 for every 5 miles. Passes may also be purchased, including a "Regular Pass" for $55.00 or a "Reduced Pass" for $30.00 available for passengers 60 years of age or older, individuals with disabilities, and children under the age of 18. Individuals with disabilities must submit a doctor's note to the office verifying that the rider has a disability that prevents them from driving.

In addition to other transportation options and services, Trinity Metro operates a commuter vanpool program within the North Central Texas region. As of May 2022, Trinity Metro operated up to 9 vanpools with origins in Johnson County and 2 vanpools with destinations in Johnson County. The number of vanpools may change month to month as the program expands offering shared commuter transportation opportunities.

Finally, see Appendix B 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). Organizations can also contract with them to provide specific services for clients.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The demographic composition of Johnson County reflects a significant amount of growth and a diverse population, that may have high potential need for public transportation. According to the American Community Survey's 2019 5-year estimates, Johnson County's population has increased by 7.6% since 2015. Johnson County's total population is made up of more than 167,000 individuals and more than 57,000 households according to the same estimates. There are over 23,000 individuals 65 years of age and older, making up 13.8% of the population, over 16,700 individuals with a disability, making up 10% of the population, and over 23,300 individuals are low-income, making up 14.3% of the population.

Johnson County Minority Status
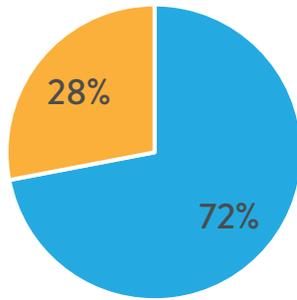
- 72% Total Non-Minority
- 28% Total Minority

Johnson County Percentage of Population 65+
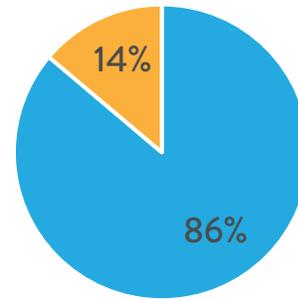
- 86% Under 65 Population
- 14% 65 and Over Population

Johnson County also hosts relatively few zero-car households at just 2% of households.

Johnson County's racial composition includes a majority White population, making up 90.7% of the total population, followed by 3.6% total Black, 1.0% total Asian, 0.5% total American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.4% total Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 2% total Other Race, and 1.9% total Two or More Races. Of the total population, 21.4% of individuals identify as Hispanic or Latino. When compared to the aggregate of the 16-county North Central Texas Region of 68.8% total White population, Johnson County as a larger population, at 90.7%. Of the total population in Johnson County, 6.1% are considered to have limited English proficiency. Efforts to promote existing or new transit services should include strategies to reach this population.

PROCESS

Outreach

Public outreach for Johnson County was conducted through a series of virtual public meetings, one-on-one meetings with county stakeholders, surveys, and public mapping data. Outreach efforts were advertised through our Access North Texas website and Local Motion publication. Staff sent out 62 emails inviting

Johnson County stakeholders and contacts to participate in public outreach efforts.

Virtual public meetings saw 10 attendees including members of the public and representatives from county non-profits, Independent School Districts, and local municipalities. The public survey received 88 responses from Johnson County residents and the agency survey received 2 responses from Johnson County stakeholders and organizations. Finally, 4 one-on-one meetings were conducted with stakeholders from non-profits and municipalities throughout Johnson County.

Data Sources

The planning process for Access North Texas involved North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff, community stakeholders, transportation providers, and community members. Through virtual meetings, members from each county prioritized its main concerns about transit access in their area.

Virtual public meetings and discussions with Johnson County stakeholders revealed desire for increased connectivity within the county and into the more urban parts of the region. Many noted the desire for expansion of on-demand or demand-response public transportation options

within the county and some mentioned a desire for fixed route bus within the county, and commuter bus or rail into Tarrant County employment hubs. Discussions with local stakeholders revealed that public transportation is frequently used to connect older residents to medical appointments. Some municipal representatives noted that there is demand for rail connectivity into Fort Worth

Some common themes among discussions with Johnson County residents and stakeholders included the need for increased connectivity across municipal boundaries and increased service choice. Participants mentioned the desire or need to implement fixed-route bus services within the county and increased commuter services into Fort Worth and Dallas to fit residents' travel needs.

Some additional concerns revealed through virtual public meetings and one-one-one meetings included concerns related to health and sanitation measures on transit vehicles and the desire for more extensive informational and educational

resources related to existing transit options. Respondents expressed interest in a more expansive and accessible transit service network in Johnson County that facilitates travel across municipal boundaries and provides healthy and safe travel to their destinations.

Another form of receiving data from Johnson County residents and stakeholders was a transportation survey; made available online and translated into English and Spanish. Due to COVID-19 limitations, paper copies were available upon request or through transportation partners. The survey helped NCTCOG staff to collect first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations.

Staff received 90 survey responses from Johnson County including 88 responses from the public surveys and 2 responses from the agency survey. The survey revealed that many respondents noted health concerns and

Johnson County Low-Income Individuals

0% - 9%
10% - 21%
22% - 34%
35% - 51%
52% - 100%

N

0   4.5   9 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census block group level
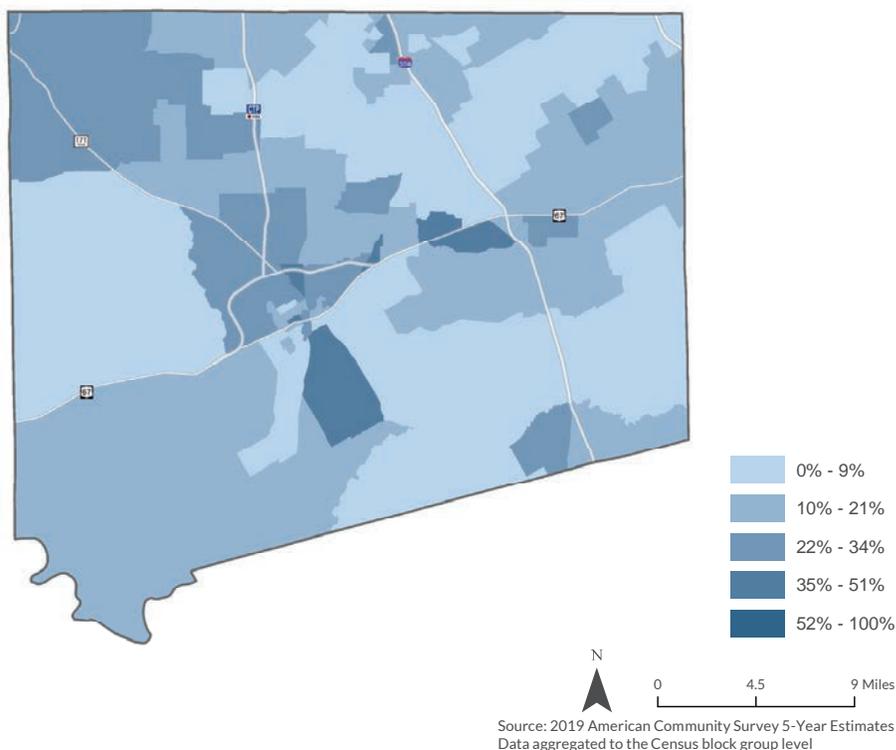
limited-service areas among barriers to public transportation experienced in Johnson County. Many noted that public transportation does not meet their needs or that information about how to use existing transit options is lacking.

When prompted to note the kinds of missed trips individuals were experiencing, a significant portion of respondents noted that they were not missing trips, however, those who were missing trips or experienced delays noted that they were primarily missing work and medical trips. Respondents most frequently noted that their desired mode of transportation is demand-response or on-demand services, followed closely by fixed-route bus or commuter bus to light rail stations. Most respondents noted that the enhancements they would like to see include better information about how to use transit and increased health and sanitation measures on vehicles.

The surveys revealed that Johnson residents and stakeholders would like to see Johnson County transit services gain more connectivity into Fort Worth and Dallas, expand demand-response or on-demand transit service options, and provide more detailed and accessible information about the services to connect them to work and to medical trips. All information gained through outreach meetings and transportation survey was gathered to develop the prioritized strategies for Johnson County.

TAIT Tool and Environmental Justice
The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) identifies communities who face transportation disadvantages and may have greater potential need for public transit. This tool is updated by NCTCOG and is based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Based on information from TAIT, in Johnson County there are a few census block groups where populations of individuals age 65 and over, below poverty, and with disabilities are above the regional percentages.

Johnson County Zero-Car Households
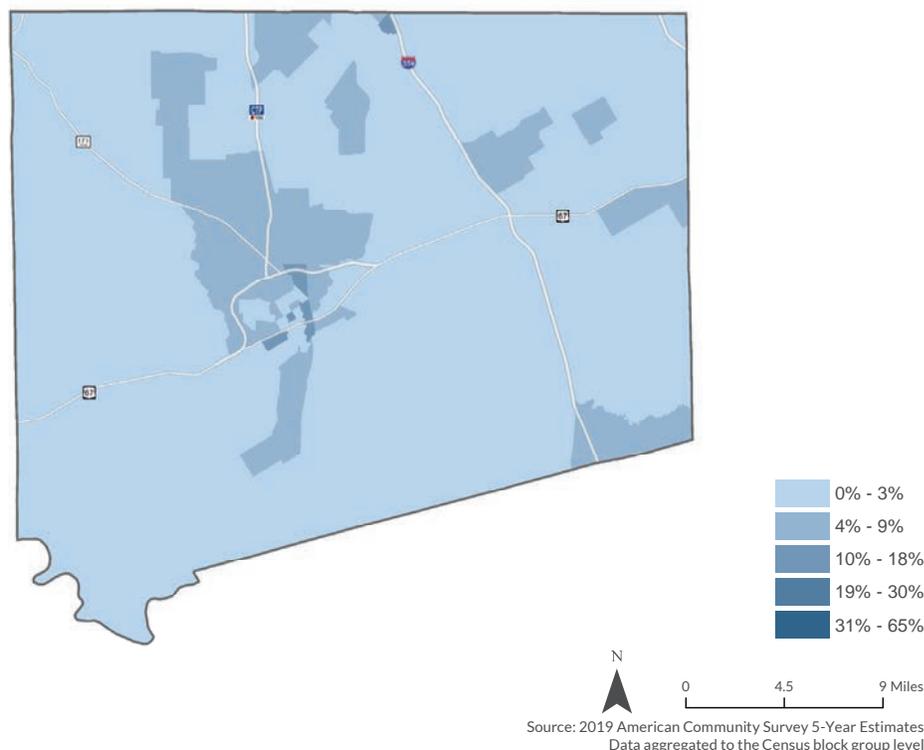
Legend:
- 0% - 3%
- 4% - 9%
- 10% - 18%
- 19% - 30%
- 31% - 65%

0   4.5   9 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census block group level

Johnson County Transit
Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

Legend

All Variables At or Below
Regional Percentage

One Variable Above
Regional Percentage

Two Variables Above
Regional Percentage

All Variables Above
Regional Percentage

N

0   6.5   13 Miles

**Source: 2019 American Community
Survey 5-Year Estimates**

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary
screening 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.

Analysis

The Johnson County TAIT map reveals that Johnson County contains a few Census blocks wherein the proportion of populations of seniors, individuals with disabilities, and people below the poverty line is above the regional average. The populations which fit this description are located at the core of the county, primarily near Cleburne and at the intersection of highway 67 and I35W. Johnson County hosts several Census block groups in which two variables are above the regional average, most of which are located along the more rural southern and northwest portions of the county.

Development of Strategies

The prioritized strategies were developed once information from outreach meetings, the transportation poll, and research data was compiled and analyzed for patterns and gaps of service. Observations and recommendations were coded into six main categories to identify themes across the 16-county region and inform regional goals. Those goals provide a framework for the Access North Texas and individual strategies were identified for Johnson County to further those goals and provide a plan for transit providers and organizations in future implementation of services. Drafted goals and strategies were provided to the stakeholders for additional feedback and review prior to the finalization of the plan.

FINDINGS

Outreach efforts within Johnson County revealed that residents and stakeholders are interested in seeing transit services expand mode options, increase connectivity to employment centers in Tarrant and Dallas Counties, improve educational resources surrounding transit, and increase health and sanitation measures on transit vehicles.

In Johnson County, 90 individuals completed the Access North Texas public survey with 47% of respondents indicating that they could get to where they need to go, while others noted several barriers to getting to where they need to go, service areas and health concerns, chief among them. Many noted a desire for better connectivity to Dallas and Fort Worth employment centers and a desire to travel more easily across county and municipal lines.

Outreach efforts revealed that 51 respondents noted a need for better information about how to use transit and available transit resources. Concerns with transit service areas limiting travel to desired destination was highlighted by 7 respondents. In Johnson County, 28 respondents indicated that health and sanitation enhancements would benefit transit services with 9 respondents indicating that health concerns are a barrier to transit travel. Safety concerns were also listed among 6 respondents and 4 respondents indicated that transit services take too long to connect individuals to their destinations.

Johnson County residents and stakeholders are interested in seeing a more expansive, safe, and mode-diverse transit service in Johnson County. Respondents would like to have better access to rail stations and employment destinations outside of county and municipal boundaries through the expansion of demand-response and on-demand solutions or fixed-route and commuter bus services. Johnson County residents would like better access to work, medical appointments, and other destinations and easier access to information about the public transit options available for them to do so.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The goals and strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders identified as needing to be implemented over the next few years. The strategies build upon the progress and feedback that has been provided since the 2018 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when

REGIONAL GOAL	JOHNSON COUNTY-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES
Plan and Develop Transportation Options by Assessing Community Need and Challenges	A) Conduct planning activities to further identify public transportation needs of residents outside of existing transportation authorities and define additional coordination opportunities for existing providers B) Invest in programs to assist with filling gaps in public transportation and facilitate service for work-related trips C) Invest in programs that facilitate transportation trips to medical and healthcare appointments
Implement Services by Enhancing Transportation Options and Expanding Where Service Gaps Exist	A) Increase access to employment, social (such as entertainment and shopping centers), religious, and well-being trips in areas with limited to no public transportation service B) Expand public transportation services to key destinations throughout the region without comprehensive service and support regional integration of new services.
Coordinate with Transportation Providers, Public Agencies, and Stakeholders to Increase Efficiencies	A) Work with regional and local organizations to increase ease of travel across municipal and county boundaries B) Foster cooperation between public transit providers within counties to allow better connectivity and simplify regional trips
Support Public Transportation Recovery and Growth	A) Promote safe and healthy practices on public transportation services B) Establish driver recruitment and retention programs for public transportation services to address difficulties in retaining drivers
Promote Access and Information about Available Transportation Options	A) Enhance communication and outreach programs to improve awareness of existing or new transportation options B) Partner with agencies, recreation centers, senior residencies, housing assisted living centers, and other organizations to publicize information C) Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transportation through leadership, policy, or funding initiatives

state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Implementing the Plan

Within Johnson County, both the City of Burleson and the City of Cleburne have included elements of public transportation in their city plans to address short- and long-term transportation needs. For the City of Burleson's Imagine Burleson 2020 Midpoint Update, goals include encouraging a multi-modal transportation system by developing a mobility innovation plan and a transit master plan. In the City of Cleburne's 2014 Comprehensive Plan, regional commuter rail was identified a possible development opportunity to help accommodate traffic growth and expand mobility.

Transportation providers and partners may begin to implement some of these strategies in Johnson County by focusing on increasing public awareness of transit services through travel training programs or marketing efforts in the area. Due to the interest in expanded transit services, transportation providers and stakeholders may desire to coordinate with one another to increase connectivity and expand options.

Agencies and organizations looking to develop transit projects aligned with these strategies may find support through NCTCOG's Transit Strategic Partnerships Program or the TxDOT Call for Projects. Competitive proposals will demonstrate innovative solutions, strategic value, sustainability, implementation capacity, and evidence of collaboration. Most importantly, the proposal's needs assessment will need to be supported directly by county specific strategies identified in this plan. The most competitive proposals will demonstrate how the proposed project or service will utilize one or more strategies to enhance transit accessibility for transit-dependent

populations. More information on the Transit Strategic Partnerships Program can be found at www.nctcog.org/strategicpartnerships-transit. More information on the TxDOT Call for Projects can be found at www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/public-transportation/local-assistance.html

REFERENCE TO THE APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Johnson County, please see Appendices A-E, available online at www.accessnorthtexas.org.

See Appendix A, Summary & Status of 2018 to review previously adopted goals and strategies that were included in the 2018 Access North Texas plan.

See Appendix B, Get-A-Ride Guide, for a list of public and private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These providers are an additional transportation resource that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix C, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed and how to use it.

See Appendix D, Data & Analysis, for copies of the transportation surveys, statistics, and affiliated county-based maps.

See Appendix E, Outreach Meeting and Supplemental Information, for a list of previously held virtual meetings by county with a copy of the presentations.

KAUFMAN COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to document the public transportation needs for seniors, 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 existing services, research conducted and collected, the public outreach meetings, the transportation poll used to collect individualized input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Kaufman County.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES

In addition to other transportation options and services, The Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) operates a commuter vanpool program within the North Central Texas region. DCTA's vanpool program service area includes Kaufman County. Within Kaufman County, there are 6 vanpools in operation by another transit agency that have origins within the county. Future vanpools within Kaufman County will be operated by DCTA. The number of vanpools may change month to month as the program expands offering shared commuter transportation opportunities.

STAR Transit provides demand-response service as well as Medicaid transportation within parts of Kaufman County. The Medicaid transportation must be scheduled at least one (1) day in advance, and is available from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday – Friday. Users must call STAR Transit to request a ride. Fares are based on trip distance and range from $2 to $12 for the general population, with a 50% discount for qualified reduced fare riders (seniors 60+, veterans, people with disabilities). All STAR Transit Medicaid

transportation vehicles are ADA-accessible, and drivers are trained in first aid and CPR.

STAR Transit's STARNow demand-response service is available within the cities of Kaufman, Terrell, Mesquite and Seagoville and operates from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday – Friday. Trips must originate and end within the same city. Trips may be booked in advance, but only for the same day. Riders may book by calling STAR Transit at least 30 minutes in advance, or they may book by using the STARNow mobile app, available on the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. Fares are $2 per trip, or $1 for qualified seniors 60+, veterans, and people with disabilities. Children 12 and under may ride free when accompanied by a paid fare rider. The STARNow service in Seagoville can connect riders to the DART Buckner Station, part of the DART Green Line.

Finally, see Appendix B 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). Organizations can also contract with them to provide specific services for clients.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Demographic data in Kaufman County was analyzed to identify populations in particular need of public transportation. The county's population has grown sharply since 2015, expanding 13.3% to a total of 123,804 per the 2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. In comparison, the Dallas / Fort Worth metropolitan area grew by 8% in the same period. As the county and region continue to grow, alternatives to travelling by car will be needed to reduce congestion and emissions.

Within Kaufman County, 5.8% of the population is of limited English proficiency. This is lower than the regional percentage, but promotional efforts

for existing and new services should be inclusive of limited English proficiency populations.

In Kaufman County, 15% of the population was recorded as low-income. These populations may have less reliable access to personal automobile transportation, or no access whatsoever. Efforts should be made to identify geographies within Kaufman County which have larger concentrations of poverty and determine if they are currently served by existing transit services.

Additionally, 13% of the population in Kaufman County reports having a disability, compared with 9.5% in the region overall. While some individuals with disabilities have full mobility, special consideration should be made for accessibility in any public transportation service being proposed for the county. Outreach to populations with disabilities should determine what opportunities

and services are unavailable to them due to challenges in securing reliable transportation.

PROCESS
Outreach
Public outreach for Kaufman County was conducted through a series of virtual public meetings, surveys, and public mapping data. Outreach efforts were advertised through email invitations, the Access North Texas website, NCTCOG's Local Motion publication, a press release, and social media.

NCTCOG conducted two public meetings conducted over Zoom, and a survey shared by the Community Council of Greater Dallas (CCGD). Invitations to attend the public meetings, fill out the survey, and share the information about Access North Texas were sent to 50 people. Three comments were received in the online

Kaufman County Low-Income Individuals
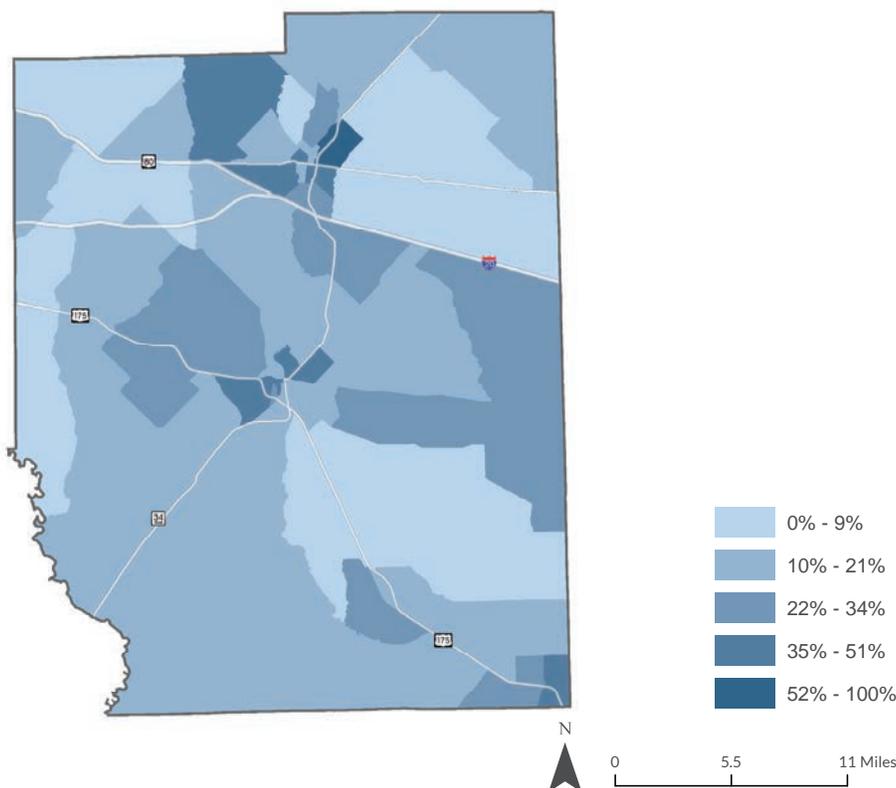
0% - 9%
10% - 21%
22% - 34%
35% - 51%
52% - 100%

N

0   5.5   11 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census block group level

Percentage of Individuals with a Disability in Kaufman County

13%

87%
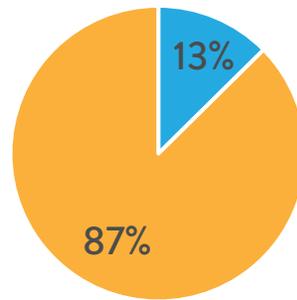
■ Percent of Individuals with a Disability
■ Percent of Individuals without a Disability

public meetings, and 28 responses were received through the surveys. The CCGD survey received eight responses from participants in Kaufman County, while the online and paper surveys received ten responses. Five members of the public attended the online public meetings, including representatives from STAR Transit, local government, and a human services organization.

Data Sources
The planning process for Access North Texas involved North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff, community stakeholders, transportation providers, and community members. Through virtual meetings, members from each county prioritized its main concerns about transit access in their area.

Another form of receiving data from Kaufman County residents and stakeholders was a transportation survey; made available online in both English and Spanish. Due to COVID-19 limitations, paper copies were available upon request or through transportation partners. The survey helped NCTCOG staff to collect first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations.

All information gained through outreach meetings and transportation survey was gathered to develop the prioritized strategies for Kaufman County.

TAIT Tool and Environmental Justice
The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) identifies communities who face transportation disadvantages and may have greater potential need for public transit. This tool is updated by the North Central Texas Council of Governments and is based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

Analysis
Based on information from TAIT, in Kaufman County there are several census block groups where populations of individuals age 65 and over, below poverty, and with disabilities are above the regional percentages. Additionally, there are seven census block groups with all three variables above the regional percentage that also have a greater percentage of zero-car households than the region overall.

The three-variable census block groups are concentrated in central Kaufman County, parts of northern Kaufman County, and southeastern Kaufman County, running along the eastern

Kaufman County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)
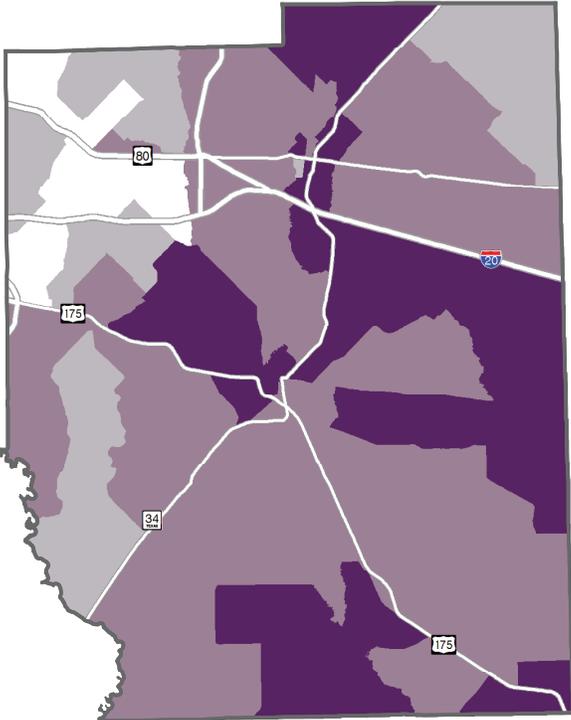
Legend

All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage

One Variable Above Regional Percentage

Two Variables Above Regional Percentage

All Variables Above Regional Percentage

0   7.5   15 Miles

N

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening 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.

I-20 corridor, central and southern US-175 corridor, and northern State Highway 34 corridor. Municipalities in the three-variable block groups include Kaufman, Terrell, Mabank, and Poetry. Additionally, the unincorporated areas bounded by I-20 to the north, TX-34 to the west, and US-175 to the south contain several of the three-variable census block groups.

Of the two-variable census block groups, the majority appear to exceed the regional percentages for population over age 65 and population with disabilities, not population below the poverty line.

The only census block groups without any variables above the regional average are in the northwestern part of the county, roughly bounded by US-165 to the south and US-80 to the north. This includes the city of Forney.

Development of Strategies
The prioritized strategies were developed once information from outreach meetings, the transportation poll, and research data was compiled and analyzed for patterns and gaps of service. Observations and recommendations were coded into five (5) main categories to identify themes across the 16-county region and inform regional goals. Those goals provide a framework for the Access North Texas and individual strategies were identified for Kaufman County to further those goals and provide a plan for transit providers and organizations in future implementation of services. Drafted goals and strategies were provided to the stakeholders for additional feedback and review prior to the finalization of the plan.

FINDINGS

In Kaufman County, 28 people completed the Access North Texas survey. While the majority of respondents did not report missing trips due to a lack of transportation, improved service areas and service times made up 50% of the reported desired enhancements. Of particular focus was the expansion of same-day service for demand-response transportation within the county, with demand-response making up 63% of the responses for desired modes. As of writing, this is only available in the STARNow service areas.

While the STARNow service is available in Terrell, it is not available in the cities of Kaufman, Mabank, or Poetry, nor is it available in the unincorporated areas which contain many of the three-variable census block groups identified in the TAIT.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The goals and strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders identified as needing to be implemented over the next few years. The strategies build upon the progress and feedback that has been provided since the 2018 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Implementing the Plan
Agencies and organizations looking to develop transit projects aligned with these strategies may find support through NCTCOG's Transit Strategic Partnerships Program or the TxDOT Call for Projects. Competitive proposals will demonstrate innovative solutions, strategic value, sustainability, implementation capacity, and evidence of

REGIONAL GOAL	KAUFMAN COUNTY-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES
Plan and Develop Transportation Options by Assessing Community Need and Challenges	A) Invest in programs that facilitate transportation trips to medical and healthcare appointments
Implement Services by Enhancing Transportation Options and Expanding Where Service Gaps Exist	A) Improve existing public transportation options to better fit the needs of riders and households with 1 or zero cars by increasing service frequency and availability B) Expand public transportation services to key destinations throughout the region without comprehensive service and support regional integration of new services. C) Establish additional assistance or more specialized public transportation options for customers who are not ADA paratransit eligible or physically capable of utilizing regular public transportation services
Coordinate with Transportation Providers, Public Agencies, and Stakeholders to Increase Efficiencies	A) Work with regional and local organizations to increase ease of travel across municipal and county boundaries B) Develop partnerships across transportation providers to improve access to trips in the evening and weekends
Support Public Transportation Recovery and Growth	A) Promote safe and healthy practices on public transportation services
Promote Access and Information about Available Transportation Options	A) Enhance communication and outreach programs to improve awareness of existing or new transportation options. B) Conduct travel training to educate the public on available services and policies

collaboration. Most importantly, the proposal's needs assessment will need to be supported directly by county specific strategies identified in this plan. The most competitive proposals will demonstrate how the proposed project or service will utilize one or more strategies to enhance transit accessibility for transit-dependent populations. More information on the Transit Strategic Partnerships Program can be found at **www.nctcog.org/strategicpartnerships-transit**. More information on the TxDOT Call for Projects can be found at **www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/public-transportation/local-assistance.html**

REFERENCE TO THE APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Kaufman County, please see Appendices A-E, available online at **www.accessnorthtexas.org**.

See Appendix A, Summary & Status of 2018 to review previously adopted goals and strategies that were included in the 2018 Access North Texas plan.

See Appendix B, Get-A-Ride Guide, for a list of public and private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These providers are an additional transportation resource that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix C, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed and how to use it.

See Appendix D, Data & Analysis, for copies of the transportation surveys, statistics, and affiliated county-based maps.

See Appendix E, Outreach Meeting and Supplemental Information, for a list of previously held virtual meetings by county with a copy of the presentations.

PARKER AND PALO PINTO COUNTIES

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to document the public transportation needs for seniors, 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 Parker and Palo Pinto Counties. This chapter will give an overview of existing services, research conducted and collected, the public outreach meetings, the transportation poll used to collect individualized input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Parker and Palo Pinto Counties.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES

Parker County and Palo Pinto County are both served by Public Transit Services (PTS), which is the designated public transportation service for these two counties. PTS provides demand-response and has provided route services as needed throughout both counties. Their services are available to the general public but are heavily utilized by aging individuals and those with disabilities, as vehicles are all accessible per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and services are largely curb-to-curb. Fares for the demand-response service are based on zones within a 5-mile radius in Palo Pinto and Parker counties, starting at $2.00 a trip. PTS offers 50% discounted fares for Seniors 60 or older. Operating hours include Monday through Friday from 6:00am to 6:00pm throughout Parker and Palo Pinto counties.

In addition to other transportation options and services, Trinity Metro operates a commuter vanpool program within the North Central Texas region. As of May 2022, Trinity Metro operated up to 2 vanpools with origins in Palo Pinto County

and 5 vanpools with origins in Parker County. The number of vanpools may change month to month as the program expands offering shared commuter transportation opportunities.

Finally, see Appendix B 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). Organizations can also contract with them to provide specific services for clients.

Some agencies within these counties have developed plans which will likely shape the future of transit in Parker and Palo Pinto. Among these are the Parker County Thoroughfare Plan of 2020, the Weatherford Thoroughfare Plan of 2020 and the Mineral Wells Economic Development Plan of 2019. The Parker County Thoroughfare Plan states that Parker County's goals for the future of mobility include transit expansion, a more multimodal transportation environment, and increased connectivity. The Weatherford Thoroughfare Plan suggests the development of roadway connectivity will impact transit development into the future. Finally, the Mineral Wells Economic Development Plan indicates increased economic focus on transportation facilities, parking, and streets, which will likely impact roadway planning and on-demand transportation services in Mineral Wells. These plans show Parker and Palo Pinto's continued focus on roadway planning with some additional attention on multimodal transit planning in the area.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

U.S Census demographic data in Parker and Palo Pinto counties were used to identify populations that may have high potential need for public transportation. Parker and Palo Pinto counties have each experienced some degree of growth over the course of the last few years, with Parker

County's population growing by 10.2% since 2015 and Palo Pinto County growing slower with a 2.2% population growth since 2015, according to the American Community Survey's (ACS) 2019 5-year estimates.

Parker County's total population is made up of more than 133,800 individuals and more than 44,000 households according to the same ACS estimates. Of this total population, over 20,500 individuals are 65 years of age and older, making up 15.3% of the population. Over 16,000 individuals in Parker County have a disability, making up 12% of the population, and over 14,700 individuals are considered low-income, making up 11% of the population. Parker County also houses a relatively low percentage of zero-car households at just 2.6% of households.

Palo Pinto's total population is made up of more than 28,500 individuals and more than 10,200 households according to the ACS 2019 5-year estimates. Of this total population, over 5,500 individuals are 65 years of age and older, making up 19.4% of the population. Over 5,000 individuals within Palo Pinto County have a disability, making up 17.6% of the population, and over 7,000 individuals are considered low-income, making up 25% of the population. Palo Pinto County also hosts a higher percentage of zero-car households at 6.3% of households.

Both Parker and Palo Pinto have very heavily White populations, with the White population making up 83.5% of Parker County and 75% of Palo Pinto County. There are Hispanic populations in each county, making up 12.3% of Parker County

Palo Pinto & Parker Counties Persons with Disabilities

Legend:
- 0% - 6%
- 7% - 10%
- 11% - 13%
- 14% - 18%
- 19% - 26%

N

0   8   16 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census tract level

and 19.9% of Palo Pinto County. The racial composition of each county then includes less than 3% of any other single racial group. Parker County includes 1.3% Black population, 0.9% total American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.6% Asian, 0.06% total Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 1.5% Some Other Race, and 2.4% total Two or More Races.

Palo Pinto County includes 2.5% Black population, 0.7% total American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.8% Asian, 0.1% total Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 2.8% Some Other Race, and 1.6% total Two or More Races. Parker and Palo Pinto counties both contain a portion of the population with limited English proficiency, making up 3.5% of the population of Parker County and 6.2% of the population of Palo Pinto.

PROCESS
Outreach
Public outreach for Parker and Palo Pinto was conducted through a series of virtual public meetings, surveys, and public mapping data. Outreach efforts were advertised through email invitations, the Access North Texas website, NCTCOG's Local Motion publication, a press release, and social media.

NCTCOG conducted virtual meetings and sent out 89 emails inviting Parker and Palo Pinto stakeholders and contacts to participate in public outreach efforts. Virtual public meetings saw 5 attendees including members of the public and representatives from local transit providers.

A transportation survey was also given to Parker and Palo Pinto County residents and stakeholders; made available online and translated into English and Spanish. Due to COVID-19 limitations, paper copies were available upon request or through

Palo Pinto & Parker
Counties Zero-Car Households

0% - 3%
4% - 9%
10% - 18%
19% - 30%
31% - 65%

N

0   8   16 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census block group level

transportation partners. The virtual public survey received 3 responses from Parker and Palo Pinto County residents and 2 responses from Parker and Palo Pinto stakeholders and organizations. The survey helped NCTCOG staff to collect first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations.

Data Sources

The planning process for Access North Texas involved NCTCOG staff, community stakeholders, transportation providers, and community members. Through virtual meetings, members from each county prioritized its main concerns about transit access in their area.

Discussions with Parker and Palo Pinto representatives highlighted a need for expanded transit services days and hours. While PTS operates on weekdays during business hours, many individuals in Parker and Palo Pinto would like to see weekend and after-hours services in the area. Some noted concerns with accessibility of vehicles, stating that even with accessible vehicles some seniors struggle to board or load their items for trips. Others indicated that it is sometimes difficult to travel with additional bags or groceries, noting that it is difficult or time-consuming to utilize baskets and totes.

Another common theme among discussion with those in Parker and Palo Pinto counties is that there are complications associated with driver shortages. Issues related to driver recruitment and retention impact the services that transportation agencies can provide for their service area; this impact is sometimes felt in their capacity to conduct trips.

Staff received 5 survey responses from Parker and Palo Pinto Counties including 3 responses from the public surveys and 2 responses from the agency survey. The survey revealed that among barriers to public transportation

experienced in these counties, the most common barriers to public transportation ridership include health concerns, disabilities, affordability of fares, and limited knowledge of transportation options.

When prompted to note the kinds of missed trips individuals were experiencing, 4 out of 5 respondents indicated that local riders are missing trips to medical appointments and an individual indicated that they are missing shopping trips. Respondents most frequently noted that their desired mode of transportation is fixed-route bus and expanded demand-response or on-demand services. Respondents noted that the enhancements they would like to see in Parker and Palo Pinto public transportation include expanded service areas, expanded service times, and increased frequency in transit services.

All information gained through outreach meetings and transportation survey was gathered to develop the prioritized strategies for Parker and Palo Pinto Counties.

TAIT Tool and Environmental Justice

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) identifies communities who face transportation disadvantages and may have greater potential need for public transit. This tool is updated by NCTCOG and is based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Based on information from TAIT, in Parker and Palo Pinto Counties there are several census block groups where populations of individuals age 65 and over, below poverty, and with disabilities are above the regional percentages.

Analysis

The maps for Parker and Palo Pinto reveal that these counties contain several Census blocks wherein the proportion of populations of seniors, individuals with disabilities, and people below the poverty line is above the regional average. This is especially true in Palo Pinto County, the

Palo Pinto & Parker Counties Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)
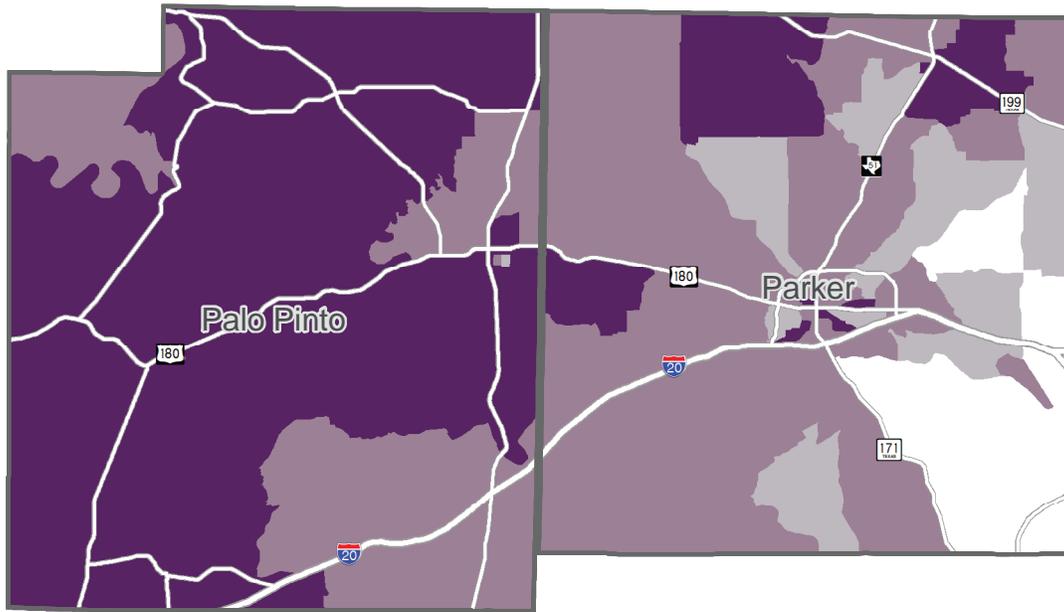
Legend

All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage

One Variable Above Regional Percentage

Two Variables Above Regional Percentage

All Variables Above Regional Percentage

0   10   20 Miles

N

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening 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,

western of the two. The populations which fit this description are in western and central Palo Pinto County and in the western and northern portions of Parker County, near Weatherford and Springtown. These counties also host several Census block groups in which just two variables are above the regional average, making up the remaining portion of Palo Pinto County and the southwest portion of Parker County.

Development of Strategies

The prioritized strategies were developed once information from outreach meetings, the transportation poll, and research data was compiled and analyzed for patterns and gaps of service. Observations and recommendations were coded into 5 main categories to identify themes across the 16-county region and inform regional goals. Those goals provide a framework for the Access North Texas and individual strategies were identified for Parker and Palo Pinto Counties to further those goals and provide a plan for transit providers and organizations in future implementation of services. Drafted goals and strategies were provided to the stakeholders for additional feedback and review prior to the finalization of the plan.

FINDINGS

Outreach efforts within Parker and Palo Pinto revealed that the counties' residents would like to see expanded transit service times and weekend services. However, outreach also revealed that service limitations are likely tied to transit providers' limitations due to driver shortages. Additionally, outreach revealed that Parker and Palo Pinto residents are missing medical and shopping trips.

In Parker and Palo Pinto counties, 5 individuals completed the Access North Texas public survey. Among these 5 responses, 2 indicated desire for increased frequency, 3 indicated desire for expanded service areas, 2 indicated desire for expanded service times, and 1 indicated a desire for better connectivity to other counties. The survey revealed that Parker and Palo Pinto residents specifically requested better connectivity to Fort Worth, Azle, and Weatherford. Outreach efforts revealed that 4 respondents noted that they frequently missed medical trips, and 1 respondent indicated that they frequently had to miss shopping trips in Parker and Palo Pinto.

Parker and Palo Pinto residents and stakeholders are interested in seeing a more frequent transit service, that operates for longer hours, in expanded service areas throughout the counties. Respondents would like to have better access to destinations outside of county and municipal boundaries through the expansion of fixed-route bus and on-demand and demand-response solutions. Parker and Palo Pinto County residents would like better access to medical appointments and other destinations as well as easier access to information about the public transit options available for them to do so.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The goals and strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders identified as needing to be implemented over the next few years. The strategies build upon the progress and feedback that has been provided since the 2018 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Implementing the Plan

Transportation providers and partners may begin to implement some of these strategies in Parker and Palo Pinto Counties by working on driver recruitment and retention strategies, which could give the opportunity to expand transit service times or increase connectivity into other areas. Also, transportation providers and stakeholders

REGIONAL GOAL	PARKER AND PALO PINTO COUNTY-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES
Plan and Develop Transportation Options by Assessing Community Need and Challenges	A) Invest in programs that facilitate transportation trips to medical and healthcare appointments B) Launch a mobility toolbox to educate on and promote public transportation options such as fixed route, demand-respond, on-demand services, etc.
Implement Services by Enhancing Transportation Options and Expanding Where Service Gaps Exist	A) Establish additional assistance or more specialized public transportation options for customers who are not ADA paratransit eligible or physically capable of utilizing regular public transportation services B) Expand service hours to support needs of low-income individuals in the service industry and outside traditional 9am-5pm jobs C) Expand public transportation services to key destinations throughout the region without comprehensive service and support regional integration of new services.
Coordinate with Transportation Providers, Public Agencies, and Stakeholders to Increase Efficiencies	A) Develop partnerships across transportation providers to improve access to trips in the evening and weekends B) Create and support partnerships between public transit providers and local organizations to increase opportunities to make fares more affordable for those in need
Support Public Transportation Recovery and Growth	A) Promote safe and healthy practices on public transportation services B) Advocate to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase availability of affordable public transportation options C) Establish driver recruitment and retention programs for public transportation services to address difficulties in retaining drivers
Promote Access and Information about Available Transportation Options	A) Enhance communication and outreach programs to improve awareness of existing or new transportation options B) Conduct travel training to educate the public on available services and policies C) Partner with agencies, recreation centers, senior residencies, housing assisted living centers, and other organizations to publicize information

may desire to increase public awareness of transit services through travel training programs or marketing efforts in the area.

Agencies and organizations looking to develop transit projects aligned with these strategies may find support through NCTCOG's Transit Strategic Partnerships Program or the TxDOT Call for Projects. Competitive proposals will demonstrate innovative solutions, strategic value, sustainability, implementation capacity, and evidence of collaboration. Most importantly, the proposal's needs assessment will need to be supported directly by county specific strategies identified in this plan. The most competitive proposals will demonstrate how the proposed project or service will utilize one or more strategies to enhance transit accessibility for transit-dependent populations. More information on the Transit Strategic Partnerships Program can be found at **www.nctcog.org/strategicpartnerships-transit**. More information on the TxDOT Call for Projects can be found at **www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/public-transportation/local-assistance.html**.

REFERENCE TO THE APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Parker and Palo Pinto Counties, please see Appendices A-E, available online at **www.accessnorthtexas.org**.

See Appendix A, Summary & Status of 2018 to review previously adopted goals and strategies that were included in the 2018 Access North Texas plan.

See Appendix B, Get-A-Ride Guide, for a list of public and private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These providers are an additional transportation resource that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix C, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed and how to use it.

See Appendix D, Data & Analysis, for copies of the transportation surveys, statistics, and affiliated county-based maps.

See Appendix E, Outreach Meeting and Supplemental Information, for a list of previously held virtual meetings by county with a copy of the presentations.

ROCKWALL COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to document the public transportation needs for seniors, 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 existing services, research conducted and collected, the public outreach meetings, the transportation poll used to collect individualized input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Rockwall County.

Existing Transportation Resources
STAR Transit is the main public transit provider in Rockwall County and offers a variety of services. Service to the general public is offered in and around Rockwall County. STAR also provides Medicaid transportation specifically in the cities of Fate, Glen Hill, Heath, McLendon-Chisholm,

Mobile City, Rockwall, and Royse City. These services are available in most areas from 6:00 am – 6:00 pm, Monday – Friday. Fares are based on distance and range from $2 - $12 for the general population and $1 - $6 for a reduced fare. Children 12 and under can ride for free with another paying adult rider. Client Advocates are available to riders who may need assistance while traveling to medical appointments and limited shopping trips. This is available at no additional cost. Tickets can be purchased online or in person at STAR Transit.

A small portion of western Rockwall County is also served by Dallas Area Rapid Transit's (DART's) Rowlett GoLink Zone. DART provides service in cities, such as Rowlett, who currently dedicate, or have plans to dedicate, a portion of sales tax to becoming a DART member city. The GoLink program provides on-demand service within designated zones throughout the DART service area. The Rowlett GoLink Zone operates from 5:00 a.m. – 8:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday and provides a connection to the DART Blue Line at Downtown Rowlett Station. GoLink one-way

Rockwall County Persons with Disabilities
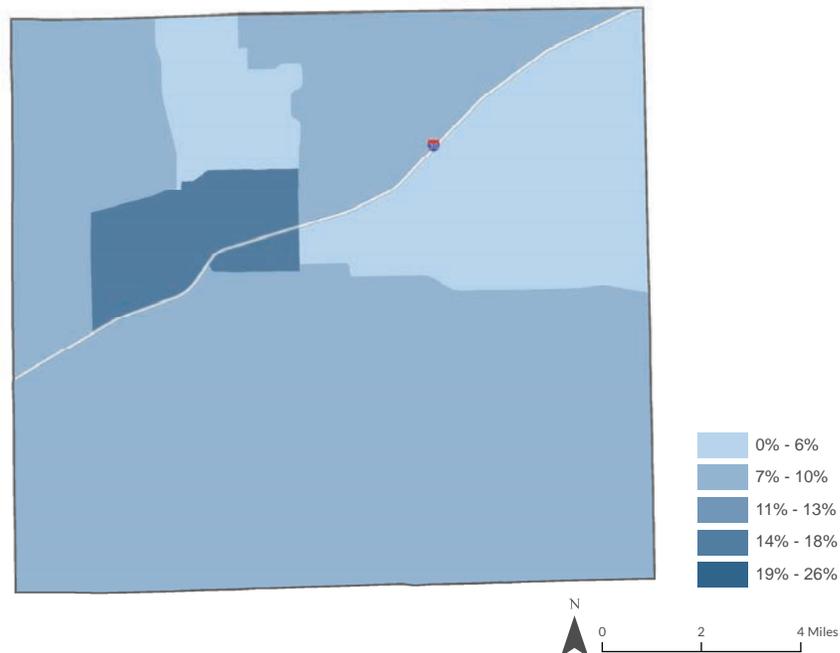
	0% - 6%
	7% - 10%
	11% - 13%
	14% - 18%
	19% - 26%

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census tract level

fares are available for $2.50, $1.25 reduced, and can only be purchased on the GoPass app or by using the GoPass Tap Card. Cash can be added to the GoPass Tap Card in person at several retail locations such as participating 7-Eleven stores. Local and regional multi-trip passes can also be used for GoLink but only through contactless payment. GoLink vehicles do not accept cash fares, paper passes or vouchers.

In addition to other transportation options and services, The Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) operates a commuter vanpool program within the North Central Texas region. As of May 2022, DCTA operated 1 vanpool with an origin in Rockwall County. The number of vanpools may change month to month as the program expands offering shared commuter transportation opportunities.

Finally, see Appendix B 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). Organizations can also contract with them to provide specific services for clients.

Naturally, gaps in service still exist in Rockwall County due to various factors, but efforts exist to address this. Several comprehensive plans have been completed in Rockwall County by local municipalities since the last plan update and many of these plans address public transportation, even if just minimally. The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is currently preparing for a transit study that will cover East Dallas, Kaufman, and Rockwall counties. This study aims to develop a comprehensive public transportation plan for cities in Eastern Dallas County that are not members of DART, as well as Kaufman and Rockwall counties. Efforts will focus on strategic implementation and coordination with other planning efforts. The initial stakeholder meeting was held in February 2021 and the study is expected to kick off in Spring 2022.

Rockwall County Low-Income Individuals

	0% - 9%
	10% - 21%
	22% - 34%
	35% - 51%
	52% - 100%

N

0   2   4 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census block group level
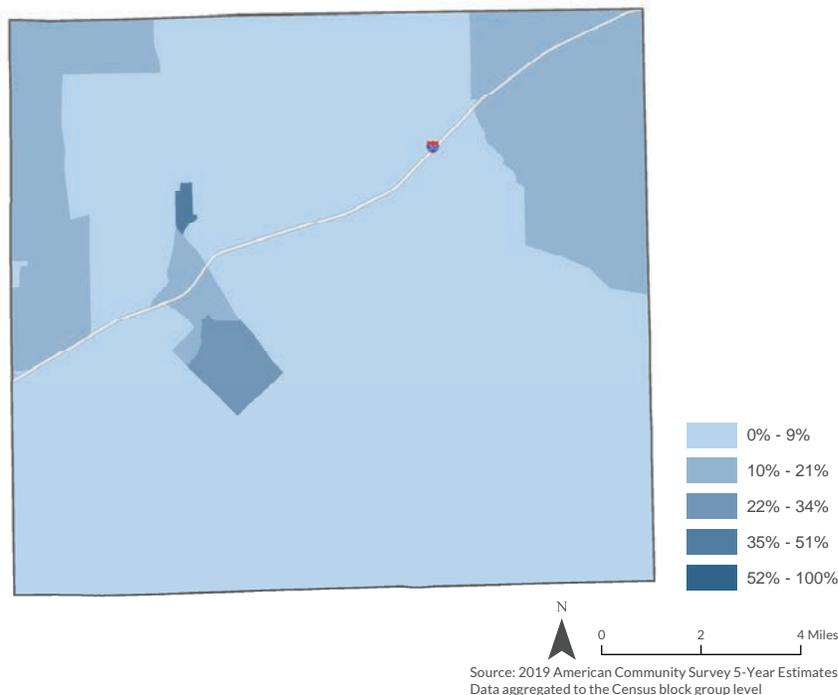
DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Rockwall County continues to experience significant growth. According to the American Community Survey's 5-year estimates, Rockwall County's population increased by 13.6% between 2015 and 2019. This puts it in the top 3 counties in our region for population growth by percentage over that period. Rockwall County's population is expected to reach just over 181,000 by 2045. According to those same estimates, the county currently has just over 97,000 people and over 33,000 households. 11,754 of these people are 65 years of age or older, making up 12% of the population, which is slightly higher than the percentage for the region. Rockwall County also includes 7,671 individuals with disabilities who make up almost 8% of the population, as well as 6,537 low-income individuals who make up 6.8% of the population. Individuals with disabilities, individuals over 65, and low-income individuals exist at a higher concentration than the overall county percentage in the northwestern portion of the county, above the I-30 line and east of Lake Ray

Hubbard (see maps below). This hotspot should be a particular priority in efforts to promote existing or new transit services.

Rockwall County's racial composition is majority White at almost 85%. This is 16% higher than the regional percentage. Similarly, the county's ethnic breakdown shows that it has a lower percentage of individuals with Hispanic or Latino origin at just 17% compared to 28% in the rest of the region. At 2.2%, zero-car households are slightly higher but still comparable to the regional percentages. The percentage of individuals with limited English proficiency is much lower than the regional percentage, at 4.9%. However, Rockwall County has almost double the percentage of veteran individuals than the region at 8.2% (see figure below). Veterans should also be a priority population to reach when promoting new or existing services.

OUTREACH PROCESS

Public outreach for Rockwall County was conducted through a series of virtual public

Rockwall County Population Over 65

Legend:
- 0% - 7%
- 8% - 13%
- 14% - 21%
- 22% - 34%
- 35% - 84%

N

0   2   4 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census block group level
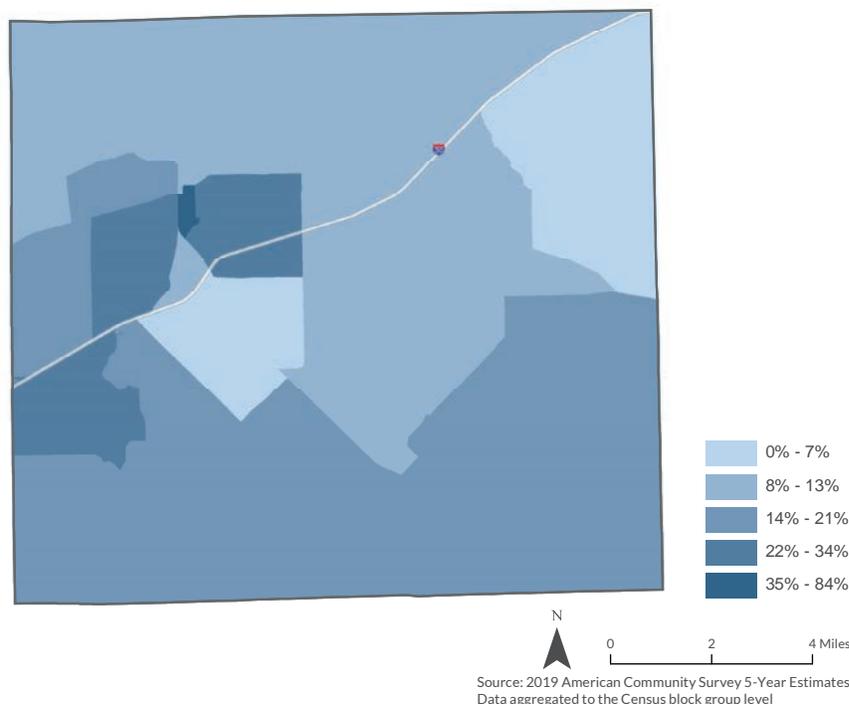
Rockwall Veteran Population
Compared to Regional Percentage
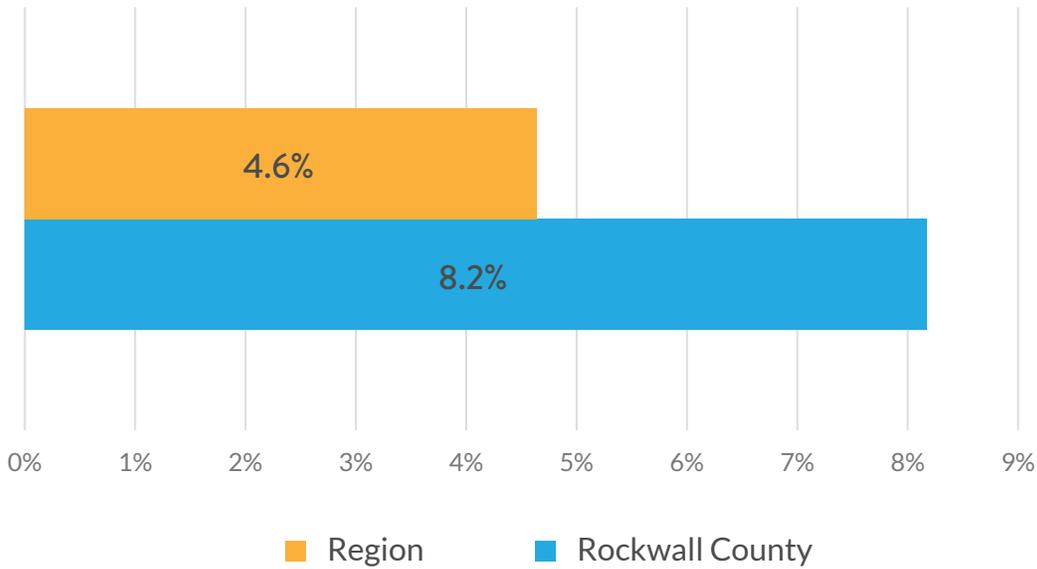
4.6%

8.2%

0% 1% 2% 3% 4% 5% 6% 7% 8% 9%

■ Region   ■ Rockwall County

meetings, surveys, and public mapping data. Outreach efforts were advertised through email invitations, the Access North Texas website, NCTCOG's Local Motion publication, a press release, and social media.

NCTCOG conducted a total of two virtual outreach meetings in Rockwall County. Email invitations were successfully shared with 47 stakeholders. 7 individuals registered for these meetings and 5 attended. Attendees included members of the public as well as representatives from local transit providers and non-profit agencies.

A transportation survey was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper and in English or Spanish. This survey collected input on public transportation in the region. A similar survey was also available online for organizations and agencies that work with transit-dependent populations. In total, 4 responses were received for Rockwall County. Of these, 2 were received from Rockwall County residents

and 2 were received from agency/organization representatives.

Data Sources
The planning process for Access North Texas involved NCTCOG staff, community stakeholders, transportation providers, and community members. Through virtual meetings, members from each county prioritized main concerns about transit access in their area.

Discussions with Rockwall County residents and stakeholders highlighted several key concerns. Riders feel that limited-service times and lack of weekend service is a considerable barrier. Additionally, connections are needed to regional destinations and major events. One attendee even mentioned wanting better connections to DART light rail. Some felt that knowledge of available transit options, or lack thereof, created another barrier.

Meeting attendees shared that STAR has made multiple enhancements recently to address some of these issues. The fare structure was recently

adjusted to be mileage based with the intent of improving trips outside of the county. STAR also added discounts on bulk tickets as well as passes for veterans. They implemented day and month pass options and generally continue to work to make service more affordable. Finally, additional on-demand zones will be added by STAR in the near future that may benefit Rockwall residents. From the agency perspective, one need shared was the ability to transport more people to medical destinations, particularly in Dallas.

Another form of receiving data from Rockwall County residents and stakeholders was a transportation survey; made available online and translated into English and Spanish. Due to COVID-19 limitations, paper copies were available upon request or through transportation partners. The survey helped NCTCOG staff to collect first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations.

Responses to the transportation surveys totaled 4 for Rockwall County. Of these, 2 were received from Rockwall County residents and 2 were received from agency/organization representatives. The top 3 reported barriers were lack of car ownership or someone to drive them, lack of knowledge of transit options, and service not being available at desired locations. Most of these responses aligned with the feedback received in outreach meetings. Despite lack of car ownership being a popular response, Rockwall County has a relatively low percentage of zero-car households, as seen in the demographic analysis. One respondent highlighted that additional buy-in is needed from elected officials in the county and that services should be offered to more than just the elderly populations. Another echoed the need for expanded service hours and connections

to destinations outside the county. Although the DART GoLink Rowlett Zone provides connection to the rest of the DART network through the blue line, only a very small portion of this zone serves Rockwall County. Expanded service either from STAR or DART is needed to provide meaningful connections. All information gained through outreach meetings and transportation surveys was gathered to develop the prioritized strategies for Rockwall County.

TAIT Tool and Environmental Justice
The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) identifies communities who face transportation disadvantages and may have greater potential need for public transit. This tool is updated by NCTCOG and is based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Based on information from TAIT, in Rockwall County there are several census block groups where populations of individuals aged 65 and over, below poverty, and with disabilities are above the regional percentages.

Development of Strategies
The prioritized strategies were developed once information from outreach meetings, the transportation poll, and research data was compiled and analyzed for patterns and gaps of service. Observations and recommendations were coded into five main categories to identify themes across the 16-county region and inform regional goals. Those goals provide a framework for Access North Texas and individual strategies were identified for Rockwall County to further those goals and provide a plan for transit providers and organizations in future implementation of services. Drafted goals and strategies were provided to the stakeholders for additional feedback and review prior to the finalization of the plan.

REGIONAL GOAL	ROCKWALL COUNTY-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES
Plan and Develop Transportation Options by Assessing Community Need and Challenges	A) Invest in programs that facilitate transportation trips to medical and healthcare appointments
Implement Services by Enhancing Transportation Options and Expanding Where Service Gaps Exist	A) Improve existing public transportation options to better fit the needs of riders and households with 1 or zero cars by increasing service frequency and availability B) Expand public transportation services to key destinations throughout the region without comprehensive service and support regional integration of new services. C) Establish additional assistance or more specialized public transportation options for customers who are not ADA paratransit eligible or physically capable of utilizing regular public transportation services.
Coordinate with Transportation Providers, Public Agencies, and Stakeholders to Increase Efficiencies	A) Work with regional and local organizations to increase ease of travel across municipal and county boundaries B) Develop partnerships across transportation providers to improve access to trips in the evening and weekends
Support Public Transportation Recovery and Growth	A) Promote safe and healthy practices on public transportation services
Promote Access and Information about Available Transportation Options	A) Enhance communication and outreach programs to improve awareness of existing or new transportation options. B) Conduct travel training to educate the public on available services and policies

FINDINGS

All Rockwall respondents to the Access North Texas survey indicated some type of barrier preventing them from getting where they need to go. Those that completed the survey mentioned lack of access to a vehicle to be a large barrier, and this was confirmed by participants in the virtual outreach meetings. Across the board, feedback from both the survey and meetings showed that riders are looking for expansion of service to new locations and new times. Many want to be connected to destinations across the region and several respondents specifically mentioned the need for connections to Dallas for medical trips. On-demand service is the most desired mode and riders would prefer the flexibility to schedule less than 1 or 2 days in advance. Finally, individuals in Rockwall County could benefit from better information about how to use transit and the available options, as this was seen as a barrier to use of the current options.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The goals and strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders identified as needing to be implemented over the next few years. The strategies build upon the progress and feedback that has been provided since the 2018 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Implementing the Plan

STAR Transit recently made several changes that relate to the identified strategies. The provider recently adjusted its fare structure to a mileage basis to help improve trips outside of the county. The agency recently added discounts on bulk tickets and tickets for veterans. STAR is also planning to launch additional on-demand zones in the future with the possibility of expanding service in Rockwall County.

While NCTCOG's East Dallas, Kaufman, and Rockwall Counties Transit Study has not officially commenced, the study will focus on coordination with other planning efforts to identify transit options, implementation strategies, potential impacts, and more. The information developed in this plan will help to inform that study.

Agencies and organizations looking to develop transit projects aligned with these strategies may find support through NCTCOG's Transit Strategic Partnerships Program or the TxDOT Call for Projects. Competitive proposals will demonstrate innovative solutions, strategic value, sustainability, implementation capacity, and evidence of collaboration. Most importantly, the proposal's needs assessment will need to be supported directly by county specific strategies identified in this plan. The most competitive proposals will demonstrate how the proposed project or service will utilize one or more strategies to enhance transit accessibility for transit-dependent populations. More information on the Transit Strategic Partnerships Program can be found at **www.nctcog.org/strategicpartnerships-transit**. More information on the TxDOT Call for Projects can be found at **www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/public-transportation/local-assistance.html**.

REFERENCE TO THE APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Rockwall County, please see Appendices A-E, available online at **www.accessnorthtexas.org**.

See Appendix A, Summary & Status of 2018 to review previously adopted goals and strategies that were included in the 2018 Access North Texas plan.

See Appendix B, Get-A-Ride Guide, for a list of public and private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These providers are an additional transportation resource that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix C, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed and how to use it.

See Appendix D, Data & Analysis, for copies of the transportation surveys, statistics, and affiliated county-based maps.

See Appendix E, Outreach Meeting and Supplemental Information, for a list of previously held virtual meetings by county with a copy of the presentations.

TARRANT COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to document the public transportation needs for seniors, 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 existing services, research conducted and collected, the public outreach meetings, the transportation poll used to collect individualized input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Tarrant County.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES

Trinity Metro is the main transportation provider in Tarrant County and provides a variety of services. Local bus service is operated in Fort Worth and River Oaks. There are also multiple limited and express bus routes connecting riders between Fort Worth and Burleson, Arlington, and DFW Airport. In 2019, Trinity Metro also began operation of four all-electric buses for its "The Dash" circulator, which travels between downtown Fort Worth and the city's Cultural District. Local bus fares are $2, $1 reduced. Express bus fares are $2.50, $1.25 reduced. Day passes may be purchased for $5, $2.50 reduced. Reduced tickets are available for individuals 65 years of age or older, persons with disabilities, Medicare card holders, and youth ages 5-19. Children aged 4 and younger ride for free. Trinity Metro's ACCESS paratransit service offers door-to-door transportation within Fort Worth, Blue Mound and River Oaks. The services are available roughly 4:20 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. Monday – Saturday and approximately 4:40 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Sunday.

The agency offers the ZipZone on-demand rideshare service in five different zones throughout Tarrant County. Service hours vary by zone. Fares range from $1 to $3 depending on the zone, and fares in the Alliance ZipZone are free when using a promotional code. In addition to other transportation options and services, Trinity Metro operates a commuter vanpool program within the North Central Texas region. As of May 2022, Trinity Metro operated up to 59 vanpools with origins in Tarrant County and up to 60 vanpools with destinations in Tarrant County. The Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA), another transit agency within the North Central Texas region, also operated up to 2 vanpools with destinations in Tarrant County. The number of vanpools may change month to month as the program expands offering shared commuter transportation opportunities.

In 2019, Trinity Metro began operating the TEXRail commuter rail service between downtown Fort Worth and DFW Airport with stops in Fort Worth, North Richland Hills, and downtown Grapevine. Service is available from 3:20 a.m. to 2:44 a.m. seven days a week. TEXRail fares are $2.50, $1.25 reduced, each way. Additionally, the Trinity Railway Express (TRE), which is jointly owned and operated by Trinity Metro and Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), connects Fort Worth to Dallas with stops in between. Service is available 3:55 a.m. to 12:22 a.m. Monday through Thursday, 3:55 a.m. to 1:52 a.m. on Friday, and 5:00 a.m. to 1:20 a.m. on Saturday. A local TRE pass (West Zone to CentrePort only) is $2.50, $1.25 reduced, each way. Riders may also pay $12, $3 reduced, for a regional multi-ride pass extending access to services in Tarrant, Dallas, and Denton counties.

Tarrant County also hosts a number of additional transportation services that specifically cater to non-member cities. Northeast Transportation Services (NETS) is a door-to-door, demand response paratransit service available to any resident of Bedford, Euless, Grapevine, Haltom

City, Hurst, Keller or North Richland Hills who has a disability or is 65 years of age or older. NETS partners with Trinity Metro and Catholic Charities of Fort Worth to provide this service in Tarrant County. Service hours are 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Fares are $3.25 per one-way trip and personal care attendants ride for free. Pre-paid tickets are sold in books of 10 for $32.50. Catholic Charities of Fort Worth also provides transportation in Tarrant County to seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income adults who are unable to access other transit services. Service is available from 6:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and fares start at $2.50 per one-way trip.

The city of Arlington launched Via, an on-demand rideshare service available to the general public, in December of 2017. The service originally covered approximately 8 square miles within the city and eventually expanded to cover the entire city, with connections to CentrePort station, in January of 2021. The service is offered between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. on Saturday. Fares are based on a distance structure ranging from $3.00 to $5.00. Trips to CentrePort station are a flat $3.00 rate. Riders can purchase a weekly pass that allows up to 4 trips per day for $25.00. The city also operates HandiTran, a door-to-door, on-demand service for individuals with disabilities and seniors in the city of Arlington. Service is offered Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Fares are $2 per one-way trip. Frequent riders can purchase monthly Handi-Passes for $55.00 that provide unlimited, available service within a calendar month. In 2020, the city was awarded $1.7 million in funding from the Federal Transit Administration through the Integrated Mobility Innovation competitive grant program. Partnering with Via, May Mobility, and the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA), the funding allowed the city to integrate autonomous vehicles into Via's

on-demand rideshare service around Arlington's downtown and UTA's campus. The one-year pilot of this service launched in March 2021. The service is available from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and the standard Via fare applies.

In April 2022, the city of Grand Prairie launched VIA Grand Prairie, an on-demand, shared transportation service. The service provides rides primarily in Grand Prairie but also to select college campuses in neighboring cities. The fare for rides in Grand Prairie is $3 per trip. Additional passengers in your group can ride for an additional $1. Seniors, 65 years of age or older, ride for a reduced rate of $2 each way. Wheelchair accessible vehicles are available. Rides to and from the University of Texas at Arlington or the TCC Southeast Campus are $3 a trip. Rides to and from Dallas Baptist University or Dallas County College – Mountain View are $4 a trip. The service is available Monday through Saturday between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Rides can be booked using the app or by calling 214-253-0874.

With such a complex network of services available to riders in Tarrant County, assistance is often needed to navigate service options. [My Ride North Texas 2.0](#) is a regional mobility management program which provides personalized travel navigation services and works to improve the coordination of transportation services. The program is currently operated through a partnership between the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) and Community Council of Greater Dallas. My Ride North Texas serves all residents of North Central Texas but strives to connect aging populations and individuals with disabilities to transportation services and inform regional medical trips through public transit. In addition to direct assistance from travel navigators, the program offers the Get-A-Ride-Guide as a resource which provides information on various transportation resources

throughout the North Central Texas region (see Appendix B).

Organizations also exist to support the existing transportation network and educate advocates on issues surrounding transit. The Tarrant Transit Alliance is one such group of advocates for multimodal transit in Tarrant County. They focus on education, empowerment, and mobilization of the community to promote transit policy throughout the region. The Transit Coalition of North Texas is another non-profit organization focused on advancing transit projects in North Texas.

In addition to this already complex network of public transportation services, Tarrant County hosts a number of private transit services which connect residents to their destinations. See Appendix B for a list of private transportation

providers operating in Tarrant County and the rest of the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals may be able to use for personal trips. Organizations can also contract with them to provide specific service for clients.

Naturally, gaps in service still exist in Tarrant County due to a variety of factors and several studies and plans have been developed to address this. In 2021, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) completed the **Tarrant County Transit Study**. The purpose of the study was to explore the transit and shared mobility needs of those who reside in municipalities without general-access transit service in Tarrant County. Three county-wide scenarios were developed, and an implementation plan outlined a framework for Tarrant County municipalities to

Tarrant County Low-Income Individuals
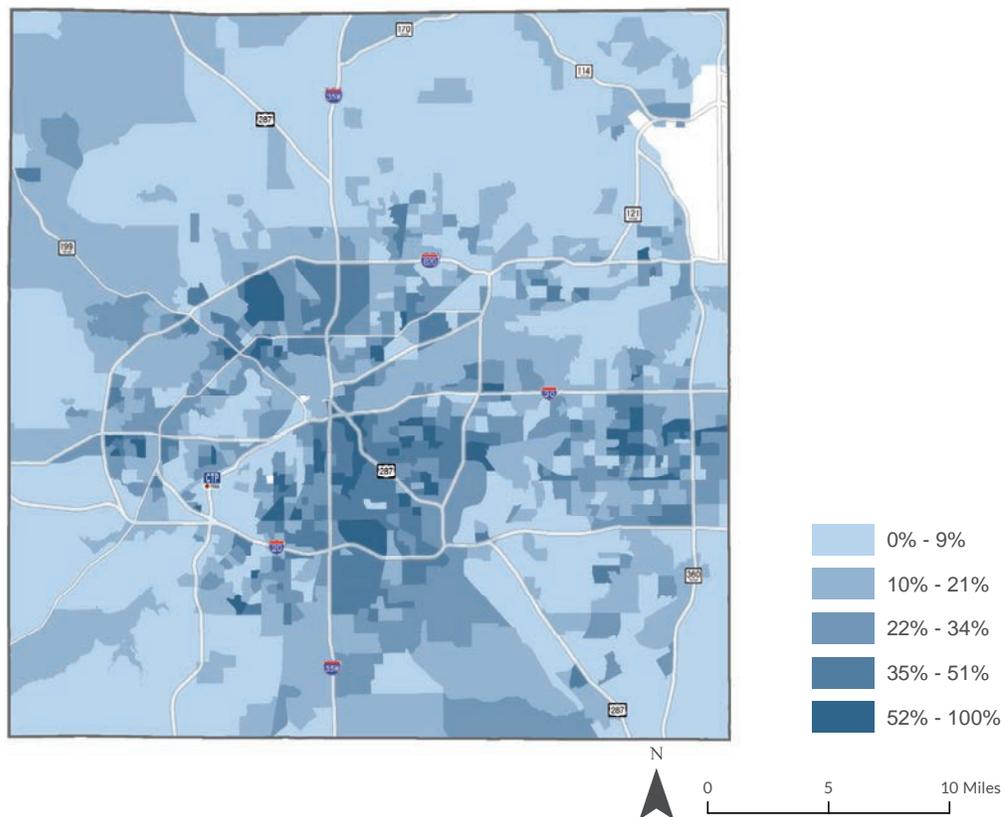
Legend:
- 0% - 9%
- 10% - 21%
- 22% - 34%
- 35% - 51%
- 52% - 100%

0   5   10 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census block group level

establish or expand transit service based on those scenarios. In 2020, the city of Fort Worth began implementing a comprehensive long-range transit master planning process, , to determine transit improvements that will be needed for Trinity Metro services to catch up with current demands and to grow in a manner that will keep up with future growth. Beginning in 2020, Trinity Metro also conducted a network redesign process, [A Better Connection](), and implemented the changes in 2021. The redesigned network improves service across the system and added service to new areas.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Tarrant County continues to experience a significant amount of growth. According to the American Community Survey's 2019 5-year estimates, Tarrant County's population has increased by 7% since 2015. According to these same estimates, Tarrant County's total population is made up of almost 2,050,000 individuals and 708,252 households. 225,738 of these individuals are 65 years of age or older, making up 11% of the population. Tarrant County also includes 208,695 individuals with disabilities who make up 10.2% of the population, as well as 334,614 low-income individuals who make up 16.5% of the population.

Tarrant County's racial composition is majority white at 67% with a significant black population as well at 16.51%. This is comparable to the regional racial composition. Similarly, Tarrant County's ethnic breakdown matches the regional breakdown with approximately 28% Hispanic or Latino population and approximately 71% non-Hispanic or Latino.

Tarrant County has a higher percentage of veteran individuals than the region at 7.2%. Although the county has a low percentage of zero-car households at 4.3%., that percentage is still higher

Tarrant County Zero-Car Households
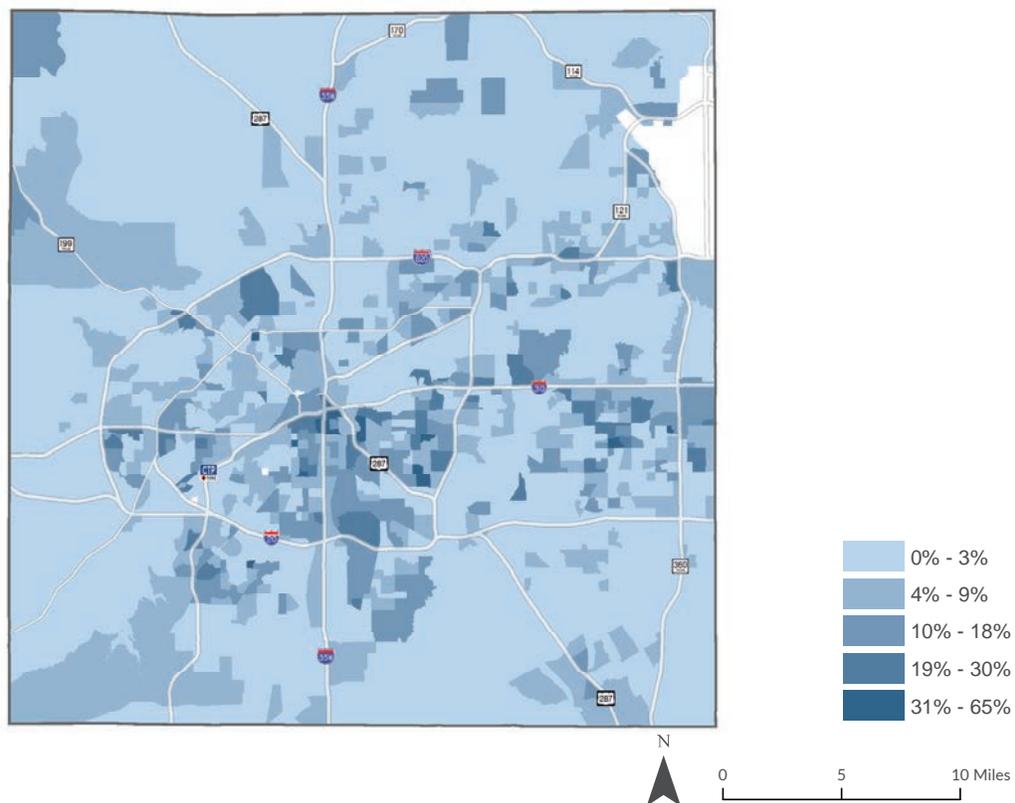
0% - 3%
4% - 9%
10% - 18%
19% - 30%
31% - 65%

N

0   5   10 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census block group level

Tarrant County Racial Composition

- White
- Black
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Some Other Race
- Two or More Races
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

67.04%
16.51%
6.43%
0.50%
0.19%
7.13%
3.19%
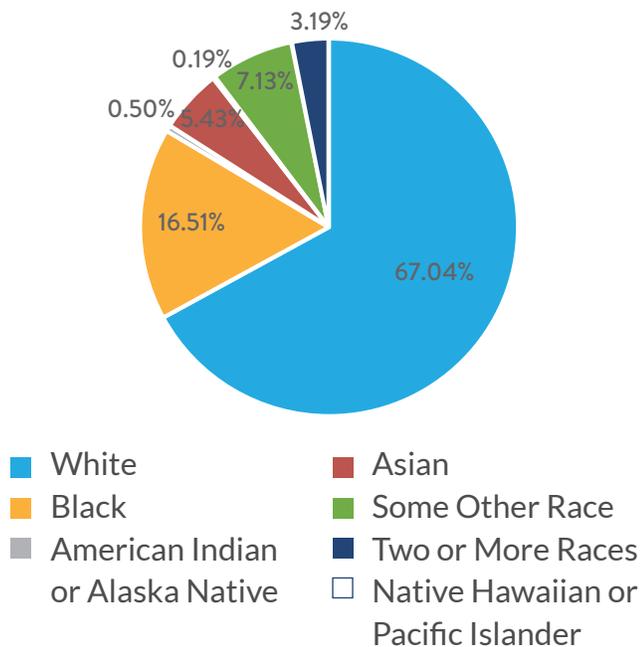
than the regional percentage of 1.6%. Finally, while the number of homeless individuals is naturally difficult to estimate, the Tarrant County Homeless Coalition's (TCHC) 2021 **State of the Homeless Report** indicated a total of 1,234 homeless individuals identified in the point in time count. 8% of those individuals are veterans. Physical and mental disability is one of the top three reasons people become homeless and TCHC identified chronically homeless individuals, who often suffer from long-term health conditions and physical disabilities, as the community's priority population for the following year. Efforts to promote existing or new transit services should include strategies to reach each of these populations.

Outreach Process

Public outreach for Tarrant County was conducted through a series of virtual public meetings, one-on-one meetings with county stakeholders, surveys, and public mapping data. Outreach efforts were advertised through email invitations, the Access North Texas website, the Local Motion publication, a press release, and social media.

NCTCOG conducted three virtual public outreach meetings in Tarrant County. Email invitations were successfully shared with 371 stakeholders. 15 individuals registered for these meetings and 5 attended. Attendees included members of the public as well as representatives from local transit providers and non-profit agencies. Three additional one-on-one meetings were held with stakeholders in Tarrant County to supplement the larger meeting participation. These stakeholders primarily represented organizations serving homeless and low-income populations in Tarrant County.

A transportation survey was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper, and available in English in Spanish. This survey collected input on public transportation in the region. A similar survey was also available online for organizations and agencies that work with transit-dependent populations. Responses to these surveys totaled 468 for Tarrant County. Of these, 456 responses were received from Tarrant County residents and 12 were received from agency representatives. Finally, 13 Tarrant County comments were received through Map Your Experience, a virtual public mapping tool that allows respondents to anonymously share comments and concerns by location.

Data Sources

The planning process for Access North Texas involved North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff, community stakeholders, transportation providers, and community members. Through virtual meetings, members from each county prioritized its main concerns about transit access in their area.

Discussions with Tarrant County residents and stakeholders highlighted the regional disconnect across provider service areas. Resources and opportunities exist across many different jurisdictions, but transit service is not aligned in a

way that allows riders to easily access them. The city of Arlington came up most frequently in these discussions as an area riders would like to access but are unable to find realistic connections to. Secondly, while the two rail offerings in Tarrant County, the TEXRail and TRE, are generally well-received by riders, access to rail services is not well-distributed throughout the county. As a result, access to key rail destinations like DFW airport is not offered to all residents in an equitable way. Several meeting attendees felt that increased frequency and extended service hours would make a significant impact on the ability of riders to utilize transit effectively. Examples such as riders budgeting over an hour of time to access destinations just 10 miles away demonstrated the impractical nature of the system for those trying to use it for daily activities. Conversations with organizations representing homeless and low-income populations also highlighted a need for transit service located in conjunction

with affordable housing, public schools, and employment. Despite the rapid increase in microtransit services in Tarrant County since the last plan update, these services were notably absent from most conversations. Some attendees had either not heard of these services at all or expressed a lack of familiarity that prevented them from trying them. Organizations serving low-income populations indicated higher fares, lack of smart phones, and an unbanked status may all be barriers to utilizing this specific type of transit service.

Another form of receiving data from Tarrant County residents and stakeholders was a transportation survey; made available online and translated into English and Spanish. Due to COVID-19 limitations, paper copies were available upon request or through transportation partners. The survey helped NCTCOG staff to collect first-hand data about public transportation in the

Tarrant County
Reported Barriers to Mobility
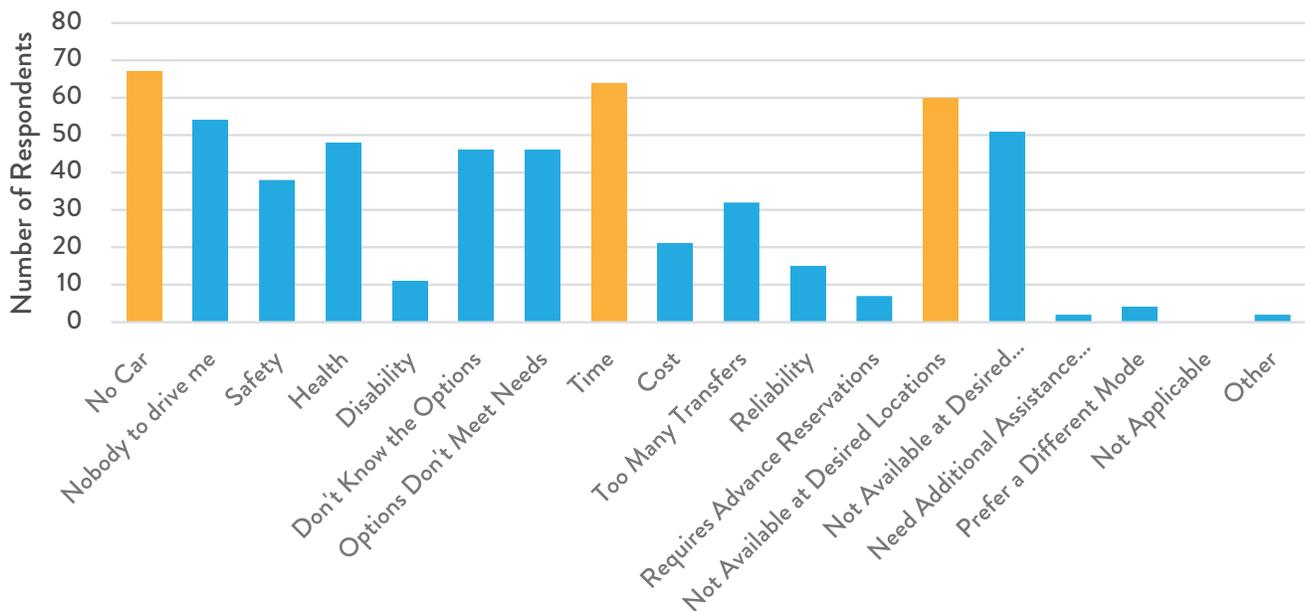
region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations.

Responses to the transportation surveys totaled 468 for Tarrant County. Of these, 456 responses were received from Tarrant County residents and 12 were received from agency representatives. The top 3 reported barriers were lack of car ownership, lack of connection to desired locations, and time. Similar to the meeting discussions, survey responses indicated a need for more frequency and extended service hours. Much of the current service does not operate efficiently enough for practical use by riders. The most desired transportation enhancement reported is an expansion of service areas. Crossing service area boundaries was once again named as a significant barrier to traveling across the county and across the region. Many respondents

Desired Transportation Modes in Collin County

- ■ Fixed-Route Bus
- ■ Commuter Bus to Light Rail
- ■ Light Rail
- ■ Demand Response or On Demand
- ■ Other

requested better connections to employment and key destinations like the city of Arlington. The lack of rail options in Tarrant County compared to the eastern side of the region also came up several times. The most desired transportation mode indicated by respondents was light rail, followed by fixed-route bus and commuter bus connecting to light rail. All the information gained through outreach meetings and the transportation survey was gathered to develop the prioritized strategies for Tarrant County.

TAIT Tool and Environmental Justice
The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) identifies communities who face transportation disadvantages and may have greater potential need for public transit. This tool is updated by the North Central Texas Council of Governments and is based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Based on information from TAIT, in Tarrant County there are significant amounts of census block groups where populations of individuals aged 65 and over, below poverty, and with disabilities are above the regional percentages.

Analysis
The highest conglomeration of block groups within Tarrant County where the three variables are all above the regional percentage is in southern Tarrant County generally covering the cities of Everman, Kennedale, and Rendon. This is sandwiched between the southern portions of 35W and highway 287. Unlike Kennedale and Rendon, Everman also appears to have a higher percentage of zero-car households, perhaps indicating the necessity for more robust transit service. Other areas with three variables above the regional percentage include several portions of the western side of the county, such as Lakeside and Lake Worth. The area reaching from downtown Fort Worth to Arlington, south of 30, as well as portions surround eastern 820

Tarrant County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

Legend

All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage

One Variable Above Regional Percentage

Two Variables Above Regional Percentage

All Variables Above Regional Percentage

0   7   14 Miles

N

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening 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.

also show several three-variable block groups. Block groups that meet the criteria for only two variables or just one are much more prevalent, appearing in almost every single part of Tarrant County. The most central part of the county, within the 820 loop, has very few census block groups (approximately 12) that do not meet the criteria for at least one variable or more being above the regional percentage. Most block groups with high percentages of low-income individuals are found in this central part of the county as well as the area extending from downtown Fort Worth to Arlington south of 30. Individuals over the age of 65 are found throughout the county, trending only slightly toward the outer edges in intensity. Similarly, individuals with disabilities are found in varying degrees of prevalence throughout the county. Most zero-car households are found in the central and eastern portions of the county with a significant pocket in the northwestern corner as well.

Development of Strategies

The prioritized strategies were developed once information from outreach meetings, the transportation poll, and research data was compiled and analyzed for patterns and gaps of service. Observations and recommendations were coded into five main categories to identify themes across the 16-county region and inform regional goals. Those goals provide a framework for the Access North Texas and individual strategies were identified for Tarrant County to further those goals and provide a plan for transit providers and organizations in future implementation of services. Drafted goals and strategies were provided to the stakeholders for additional feedback and review prior to the finalization of the plan.

FINDINGS

In Tarrant County, 468 individuals completed the Access North Texas survey. Every single respondent indicated some type of barrier preventing them from getting where they need to go. The combination of all outreach efforts, including surveys and meetings, revealed that riders are unable to reach key destinations such as Arlington, east Fort Worth, and employment hot spots due to a lack of transit connections. This is true both within individual service areas and when crossing service area boundaries. The TAIT analysis identified the southeastern portion of the county as having a high concentration of transit dependent populations and low levels of car ownership. The accessibility of transit in these areas is important for both bringing individuals to opportunity and for providing transportation to opportunity elsewhere. Multiple non-profit organizations mentioned in outreach discussions that significant employment opportunity is missed out on due to lack of mobility connections to areas where those opportunities exist. The Access North Texas survey showed that the majority of missed or delayed trips in the county were for employment. Within Tarrant County riders struggle to efficiently make connections between one part of the county and another. For instance, riders in Fort Worth find it challenging to travel to Arlington, as they must move between two different service areas, service providers, and modes. And still, some municipalities within the county don't benefit from transit service at all, resulting in transit deserts where life without car-ownership is next to impossible. In Tarrant County, 67 respondents to the public survey indicated they own no car and 60 respondents said public transit was not available at the locations they needed to go. These represented two of the three highest barriers indicated in the public surveys completed in Tarrant County.

Outreach efforts also indicated a need for increased frequency and expanded service hours. While most meeting attendees and survey respondents felt that current service is reliable, the lack of frequency and lack of availability at

later hours make it difficult to use. 64 survey respondents felt that public transit takes too long, and 51 respondents said that service was not available at the days or times needed. One example given by a meeting participant was that of an individual working just south of downtown Fort Worth until 8:30 in the evening. The individual's bus route stopped running at 8:00 pm, effectively stranding them at work. The individual had no choice but to rely on a personal vehicle to maintain employment, drastically increasing their cost of transportation. Another meeting participant named East Fort Worth as having lower frequency and lower route date and time availability than they perceived in other areas of the city. On routes with low frequency, riders may have to budget over an hour worth of time, or more, just to make necessary trips a few miles away. This lack of frequency forces transit-dependent populations to budget and negotiate time in impractical ways and prevents choice riders from using transit at all. It's worth noting that Trinity Metro, the largest transit provider in Tarrant County, implemented their bus network redesign, **A Better Connection**, in September 2021 after outreach for this plan update was completed. Any associated improvements to the system that addressed frequency and service hours are not captured in the feedback collected for this plan but will be evident in future updates.

Finally, outreach revealed that next to an enhanced and improved fixed-route system, there is a strong desire for light rail service in the county. References to DART's light rail system benefiting the eastern counties of the region were used to demonstrate what meeting participants and survey respondents would like to see. Many that participated in outreach had the perception that light rail service would be faster, more efficient, and offer better connections than the current service being offered in the county. This relates directly to many of the barriers and challenges identified. Light rail service has the potential to connect riders to new locations both within and outside the county, filling gaps that previously impeded access. It may also offer better frequency and service availability, which would create a more robust system when combined with the existing fixed-route network.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The goals and strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders identified as needing to be implemented over the next few years. The strategies build upon the progress and feedback that has been provided since the 2018 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Implementing the Plan

Trinity Metro has most recently addressed transit challenges in the county through its bus network redesign, **A Better Connection**. Through changes implemented in September 2021, Trinity Metro is now able to offer more frequent routes, direct travel, routes to destinations without Downtown transfers, better connections to rail, and consistent evening/weekend service. This relates to at least one, if not more, of the strategies listed for Tarrant County. The impact of these efforts will be more easily evaluated in future plan updates.

The **Tarrant County Transit Study** developed three countywide scenarios to reflect different combinations of local and regional service. These scenarios were evaluated through the lens of accessibility, trip coverage, and estimated usage. Scenario 1, reflecting a high investment in regional service and proposed new regional routes, aligns most directly with our strategy to simplify regional trips and increase the ease of travel across boundaries.

The **Transit Moves | Fort Worth** draft plan also includes six different initiatives, most of which

REGIONAL GOAL	TARRANT COUNTY-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES
Plan and Develop Transportation Options by Assessing Community Need and Challenges	A) Develop potential connections from commuter bus lines to light rail service B) Invest in programs to assist with filling gaps in public transportation and facilitate service for work-related trips
Implement Services by Enhancing Transportation Options and Expanding Where Service Gaps Exist	A) Improve existing public transportation options to better fit the needs of riders and households with 1 or zero cars by increasing service frequency and availability B) Increase access to employment, social (such as entertainment and shopping centers), religious, and well-being trips in areas with limited to no public transportation service C) Expand service hours to support needs of low-income individuals in the service industry and outside traditional 9am-5pm jobs D) Expand public transportation services to key destinations throughout the region without comprehensive service and support regional integration of new services.
Coordinate with Transportation Providers, Public Agencies, and Stakeholders to Increase Efficiencies	A) Work with regional and local organizations to increase ease of travel across municipal and county boundaries B) Foster cooperation between public transit providers within counties to allow better connectivity and simplify regional trips C) Develop partnerships across transportation providers to improve access to trips in the evening and weekends
Support Public Transportation Recovery and Growth	A) Promote safe and healthy practices on public transportation services B) Explore sources of local revenue for public transportation through partnerships, sponsorships, and contracting for service
Promote Access and Information about Available Transportation Options	A) Enhance communication and outreach programs to improve awareness of existing or new transportation options B) Conduct travel training to educate the public on available services and policies

relate directly to strategies in this plan. The plan prioritizes improving existing service, expanding transit to new areas, improving access to transit, improving facilities and amenities, and making service easier to use. Improvements in any of these areas will support all the strategies developed under Access North Texas for the county.

Agencies and organizations looking to develop transit projects aligned with these strategies may find support through NCTCOG's Transit Strategic Partnerships Program or the TxDOT Call for Projects. Competitive proposals will demonstrate innovative solutions, strategic value, sustainability, implementation capacity, and evidence of collaboration. Most importantly, the proposal's needs assessment will need to be supported directly by county specific strategies identified in this plan. The most competitive proposals will demonstrate how the proposed project or service will utilize one or more strategies to enhance transit accessibility for transit-dependent populations. More information on the Transit Strategic Partnerships Program can be found at **www.nctcog.org/strategicpartnerships-transit**. More information on the TxDOT Call for Projects can be found at **www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/public-transportation/local-assistance.html**

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See Appendix A, Summary & Status of 2018 to review previously adopted goals and strategies that were included in the 2018 Access North Texas plan.

See Appendix B, Get-A-Ride Guide, for a list of public and private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These providers are an additional transportation resource that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix C, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed and how to use it.

See Appendix D, Data & Analysis, for copies of the transportation surveys, statistics, and affiliated county-based maps.

See Appendix E, Outreach Meeting and Supplemental Information, for a list of previously held virtual meetings by county with a copy of the presentations.

CHAPTER 13

WISE COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to document the public transportation needs for seniors, 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. (Figure 1.1) This chapter will give an overview of existing services, research conducted and collected, the public outreach meetings, the transportation poll used to collect individualized input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Wise County.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES

Texoma Area Paratransit System (TAPS) is the primary public transportation provider in Wise County. TAPS serves the general public, including seniors and individuals with disabilities. Operating within six counties including Clay, Cooke, Fannin, Grayson, Montague, and Wise County, TAPS offers demand response curb-to-curb service that is scheduled on an on-call basis. To schedule a trip, riders must call 48 hours in advance and between the hours of 7:00 am to 3:00 pm Monday through Friday. Service is priced based upon trip-distance. For the general public, trips cost $2.00 one-way to travel within city and town limits, $3.00 to travel outside the city and town limits, and $4.00 to travel out of county within the TAPS service area (six-county region). Seniors, individuals with disabilities, and students qualify for discounted rates.

The Wise County Committee on Aging also provides limited transportation services to seniors in the county. In addition to other transportation options and services, the Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) and Trinity

Wise County Persons with Disabilities
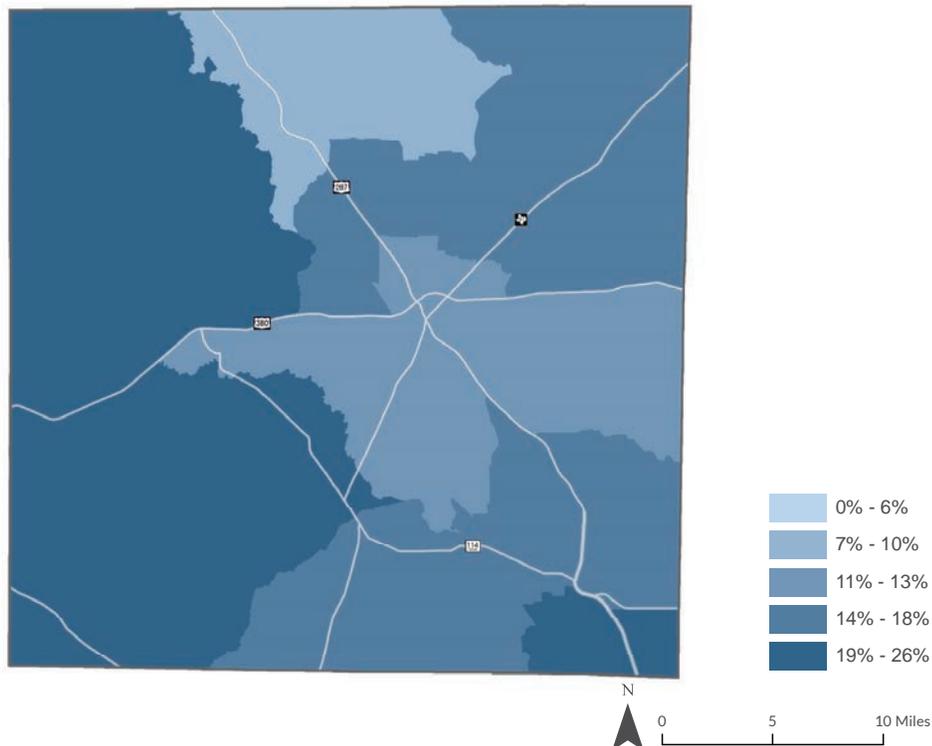
Legend:
- 0% - 6%
- 7% - 10%
- 11% - 13%
- 14% - 18%
- 19% - 26%

0   5   10 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census tract level

Metro operate a commuter vanpool program within the North Central Texas region. As of May 2022, DCTA operated up to 2 vanpools with origins in Wise County and Trinity Metro operated up to 6 vanpools with origins in Wise County. The number of vanpools may change month to month as the program expands offering shared commuter transportation opportunities.

Finally, see Appendix B, for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers offer additional transportation options that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific services for clients.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Demographic data in Wise County was used to identify populations that may have a high potential need for public transportation. The population of Wise County has increased by 8.2% between 2015 and 2019, which is similar to the 16-county region growth of 8.0% in that same time-period. In accordance with ACS 2019 5-year estimate data, Wise County currently has a total population of 66,290 people with a total of 22,369 households. As the population continues to grow, transportation options will need to adapt to meet the needs of an aging and diverse population.

Of the total population of Wise County, 9,851 people are the age of 65 and over, which is 14.9% of the population and higher than the regional percentage of 11.1%. Wise County also includes 11,081 people who identify as having a disability, which is 16.7% of the total population and higher than the regional percentage of 9.5%. In addition, Wise County has 9,549 people who identify as low-income, which is 14.7% of the total population and lower than the regional percentage of 16.0%.

Wise County's racial composition is majority white at 93.5% and 19.3% who identify as Hispanic or

Wise County Population Over 65
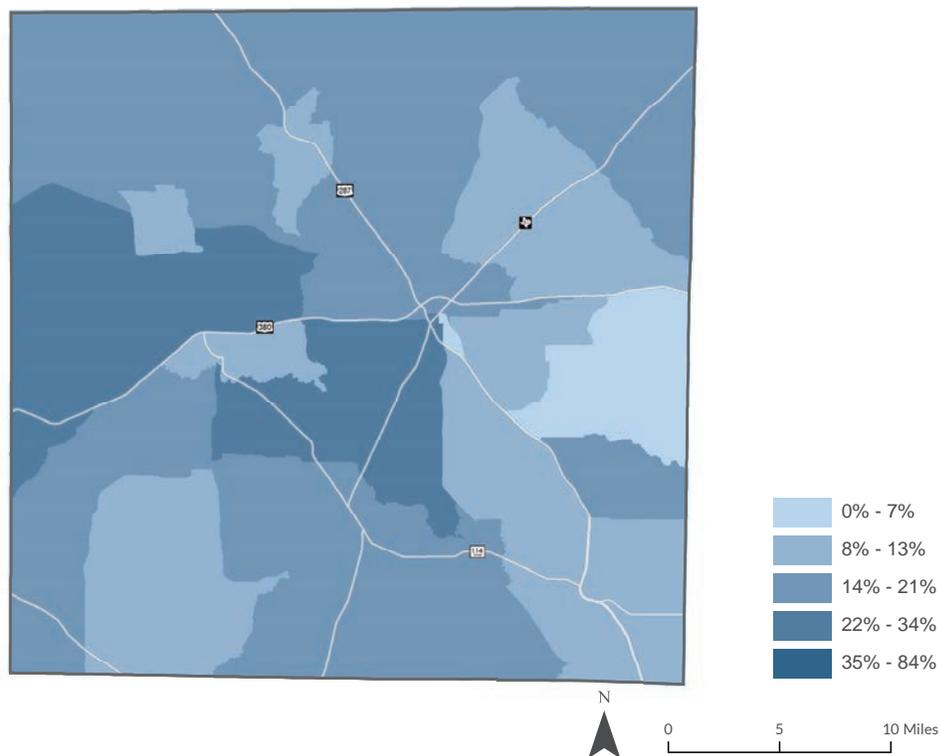
0% - 7%
8% - 13%
14% - 21%
22% - 34%
35% - 84%

N

0   5   10 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census block group level

Latino, making up the second largest majority in the county. Overall, 7.1% of residents speak English less than very well. This is less than the region wide estimates of 13.2% who have limited English proficiency. Additionally, in Wise County 3.4% of total households do not possess a car. The higher percentage of households not possessing a car are focused primarily surrounding Decatur and west of Alvord. The overall county percentage exceeds the 1.6% of zero-car households across the region. With a higher percentage of zero-car households in Wise County than the region, efforts to add and promote transit service opportunities should be included in strategies to reach this population.

PROCESS

Outreach

Public outreach for Wise County was conducted through a series of virtual public meetings, online surveys, paper surveys on request, and public mapping data. Outreach efforts were advertised through email invitations, the Access North Texas website, a publication in Local Motion, a press release, and social media.

NCTCOG conducted a total of two virtual outreach meetings for Wise County. Email invitations were successfully shared with 39 stakeholders. 5 individuals registered for the meetings and 3 attended. Attendees included a member of the public, representatives from the local transit provider and a non-profit.

A transportation survey was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper in two language formats including English and Spanish. This survey collected input on public transportation in the region. A similar survey was also available online for organizations and agencies that work with transit-dependent populations. In total, 2 responses were received for Wise County for the agency survey.

Wise County Low-Income Individuals
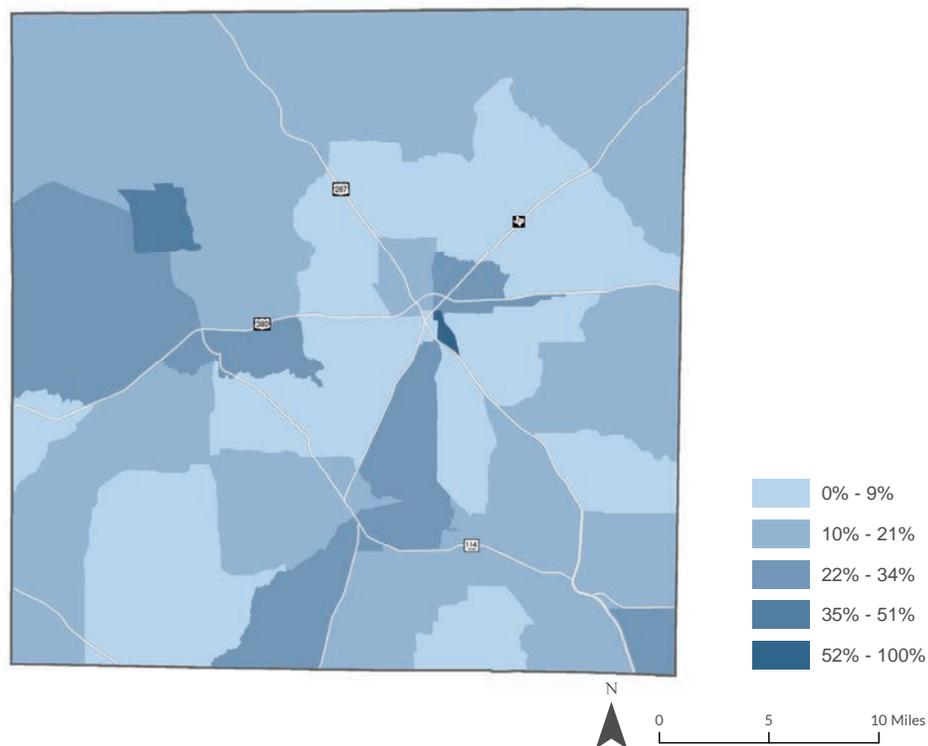
0% - 9%
10% - 21%
22% - 34%
35% - 51%
52% - 100%

N

0   5   10 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census block group level

Data Sources

The planning process for Access North Texas involved North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff, community stakeholders, transportation providers, and community members. Through virtual meetings, members from each county prioritized its main concerns about transit access in their area.

Discussions with Wise County residents and stakeholders highlighted several key concerns such as transit service area connectivity, affordability, and driver shortages. One of the major challenges mentioned is the limited options to travel within the county and to Fort Worth for medical appointments. Local organizations have worked with TAPS, the designated public transportation provider, to schedule rides and subsidize trips for riders but with the impacts from COVID-19, some riders were experiencing

affordability issues. Another challenge in Wise County is the difficulty with finding and retaining drivers, especially for larger vehicles. This was echoed by different public transportation providers across the region and in Wise County the driver turnover was described as very high. One of the participants proposed regional and state coordinatization to elevate the issue. All information gained through outreach meetings was gathered to help develop regional goals and the prioritized strategies for Wise County.

Another form of receiving data from residents and stakeholders was a transportation survey; made available online and translated into English and Spanish. Due to COVID-19 limitations, paper copies were available upon request or through transportation partners. The survey helped NCTCOG staff to collect first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and

Wise County Zero-Car Households
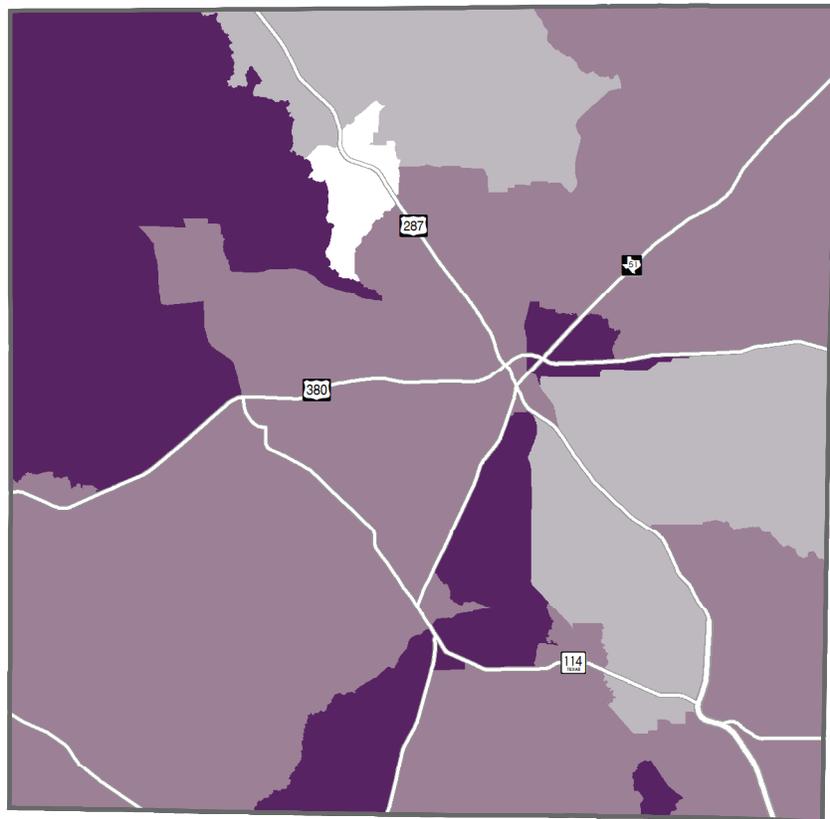
Legend:
- 0% - 3%
- 4% - 9%
- 10% - 18%
- 19% - 30%
- 31% - 65%

N

0   5   10 Miles

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data aggregated to the Census block group level

Wise County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

Legend

All Variables At or Below
Regional Percentage

One Variable Above
Regional Percentage

Two Variables Above
Regional Percentage

All Variables Above
Regional Percentage

N

0   7   14 Miles

**Source: 2019 American Community
Survey 5-Year Estimates**

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary
screening 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.

organizations that work with transit-dependent populations. No identifiable survey feedback from Wise County residents were received.

TAIT Tool and Environmental Justice

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) identifies communities who face transportation disadvantages and may have greater potential need for public transit. This tool is updated by the North Central Texas Council of Governments and is based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Based on information from TAIT, Wise County has moderately sized census block groups where populations of individuals aged 65 and over, below poverty, and with disabilities are above the regional percentages.

Analysis

The largest census block area within Wise County where the three variables are identified as above the regional percentage is clustered within northwestern Wise County between U.S. 380 and U.S. 287. In addition, areas slightly north and south of Decatur, including the City of Cottondale, have all three variables as above the regional percentage. Comparing the Wise County Low-Income, Zero-Car Household and TAIT maps, a correlation can be made with regard to low-income and zero-car households. Surrounding the City of Alvord, the map identifies that all variables are either at or below the regional percentage.

Development of Strategies

The prioritized strategies were developed once information from outreach meetings, the transportation poll, and research data was compiled and analyzed for patterns and gaps of service. Observations and recommendations were coded into five (5) main categories to identify themes across the 16-county region and inform regional goals. Those goals provide a framework for Access North Texas, and individual strategies were identified for Wise County to further those

goals and provide a plan for transit providers and organizations in future implementation of services. Drafted goals and strategies were provided to the stakeholders for additional feedback and review prior to the finalization of the plan.

FINDINGS

In Wise County, there were no in-county residents who submitted the Access North Texas survey to NCTCOG. In combination with a virtual meeting, feedback from meeting participants revealed transit service challenges orient toward cross-county boundary public transportation options, affordability, mode options, transit-based education, bus stop to destination walking distance, and efforts to increase training, recruitment, and retention of drivers. There is interest in improvements in enhancing access to affordable transportation options for medical appointments, additional connectivity within Wise County, and adding bus lanes to reduce congestion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The goals and strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders identified as needing to be implemented over the next few years. The strategies build upon the progress and feedback that has been provided since the 2018 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

Implementing the Plan

Cities within Wise County including but not limited to Bridgeport, Runaway Bay, Decatur, and Rhome have identified transportation in general as an element in their community and/or comprehensive plans but have limited information on public transportation. In combination with transit services offered by TAPS and community organizational partnerships, Wise County is

REGIONAL GOAL	WISE COUNTY-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES
Plan and Develop Transportation Options by Assessing Community Need and Challenges	A) Conduct planning activities to further identify public transportation needs of residents outside of existing transportation authorities and define additional coordination opportunities for existing providers B) Invest in programs to assist with filling gaps in public transportation and facilitate service for work-related trips C) Invest in programs that facilitate transportation trips to medical and healthcare appointments
Implement Services by Enhancing Transportation Options and Expanding Where Service Gaps Exist	A) Improve existing public transportation options to better fit the needs of riders and households with 1 or zero cars by increasing service frequency and availability B) Establish additional assistance or more specialized public transportation options for customers who are not ADA paratransit eligible or physically capable of utilizing regular public transportation services C) Expand public transportation services to key destinations throughout the region without comprehensive service and support regional integration of new services
Coordinate with Transportation Providers, Public Agencies, and Stakeholders to Increase Efficiencies	A) Work with regional and local organizations to increase ease of travel across municipal and county boundaries B) Create and support partnerships between public transit providers and local organizations to increase opportunities to make fares more affordable for those in need C) Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate, non-traditional ways to deliver and support public transportation, including but not limited to partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, transportation network companies, shared use mobility programs, and volunteer drivers
Support Public Transportation Recovery and Growth	A) Explore sources of local revenue for public transportation through partnerships, sponsorships, and contracting for service B) Partner with organizations to coordinate training and recruitment for future public transportation professionals and create pipelines with area schools C) Establish driver recruitment and retention programs for public transportation services to address difficulties in retaining drivers

REGIONAL GOAL	WISE COUNTY-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES
Promote Access and Information about Available Transportation Options	A) Conduct travel training to educate the public on available services and policies B) Partner with agencies, recreation centers, senior residencies, housing assisted living centers, and other organizations to publicize information C) Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transportation through leadership, policy, or funding initiatives

laying the framework to providing more diverse, affordable, flexible, and accessible transit options for county residents.

Agencies and organizations looking to develop transit projects aligned with these strategies may find support through NCTCOG's Transit Strategic Partnerships Program or the TxDOT Call for Projects. Competitive proposals will demonstrate innovative solutions, strategic value, sustainability, implementation capacity, and evidence of collaboration. Most importantly, the proposal's needs assessment will need to be supported directly by county specific strategies identified in this plan. The most competitive proposals will demonstrate how the proposed project or service will utilize one or more strategies to enhance transit accessibility for transit-dependent populations. More information on the Transit Strategic Partnerships Program can be found at **www.nctcog.org/strategicpartnerships-transit**. More information on the TxDOT Call for Projects can be found at **www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/public-transportation/local-assistance.html**

REFERENCE TO THE APPENDIX

For more detailed information about Wise County, please see Appendices A-E, available online at **www.accessnorthtexas.org**.

See Appendix A, Summary & Status of 2018 to review previously adopted goals and strategies that were included in the 2018 Access North Texas plan.

See Appendix B, Get-A-Ride Guide, for a list of public and private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These providers are an additional transportation resource that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix C, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed and how to use it.

See Appendix D, Data & Analysis, for copies of the transportation surveys, statistics, and affiliated county-based maps.

See Appendix E, Outreach Meeting and Supplemental Information, for a list of previously held virtual meetings by county with a copy of the presentations.

SUMMARY AND STATUS OF 2018 WORKSHEET

SUMMARY AND STATUS OF 2018 WORKSHEET

The Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for the North Central Texas region was updated and adopted through a process led by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). Participants in the development of the plan included individuals representing transportation providers, transit customers, advocates, local governments, local leaders and representatives, and health and human service agencies. This plan addresses the transportation needs of older adults, individuals with disabilities, individuals with lower incomes, and others facing transportation challenges. The previous Access North Texas plan was completed in 2018. This is the 2022 Access North Texas Plan. The plan highlights developed strategies for each of the region's 16 counties with included region-wise strategies that are goaled to improve public transportation throughout the region. County-focused prioritized strategies include a wide focus on new and improved services which also encompasses communication and awareness of services. This report provides information on the status of each strategy from the 2018 Access North Texas Plan as we transition to the newly developed 2022 Access North Texas Plan.

STATUS DEFINITIONS

Ongoing
Steps have been taken to address the strategy (or a part of it) It does not necessarily mean that a given strategy is completed. 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.

2018 REGIONAL STRATEGIES		STATUS
1	In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit	Under Development
2	Continue and expand projects that have a no-wrong-door approach to accessing transit or information about available transit	Ongoing
3	Create partnerships to simplify regional trips and reduce the number of transfers between providers	Ongoing
4	Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need	Under Development
5	Work towards uniform, regional fares to simplify and reduce the cost of regional trips for riders	Ongoing
6	Advocate to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation	Under Development
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	Ongoing
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	Ongoing

2018 COLLIN COUNTY STRATEGIES		STATUS
1	In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit	Ongoing
2	Improve partnerships and coordination between existing transit providers to simplify cross-community trips	Ongoing
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	Ongoing
4	Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate non-traditional ways to deliver public transportation services, including partnerships among public and private transportation providers	Ongoing
5	Increase service options in areas with limited access to: 1. Medical appointments including dialysis 2. Job training and education 3. Job opportunities	Under Development
6	Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure transportation resources are up-to-date	Ongoing
7	Increase public awareness of available transportation services by conducting targeted marketing to agencies such as human service organizations, medical facilities, and educational facilities	Ongoing
8	Advocate for agencies to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation	Ongoing
9	Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need	Ongoing

2018 DALLAS COUNTY STRATEGIES		STATUS
1	In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit	Ongoing
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, ect.) 3. Provide transit for additional purposes (such as medical, work, grocery stores, pharmacy, social, ect.) 4. Connect to additional locations, like regional job centers and large medical facilities	Ongoing
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	Ongoing
4	When expanding transit service, use partnerships with local employees, medical centers, cities, and other agencies to leverage multiple funding sources	Ongoing
5	Improve partnerships and coordination between existing transit providers to simplify regional trips	Ongoing
6	Continue to conduct travel training to teach riders how to use public transportation and make regional transfers	Ongoing
7	Continue to conduct targeted marketing to local agencies about existing transportation resources	Ongoing
8	Complete and expand projects that have no wrong door approach to accessing transit: 1. Update DART's GoPass software to include on-demand providers such as taxis, transportation network companies (like Uber or Lyft), bike, and car sharing service; upgrade trip planning feature; integrate carpooling; work with medium and small transit providers to join the app; and allow additional payment options for individuals without credit cards 2. Continue efforts 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.	Ongoing

2018 DALLAS COUNTY STRATEGIES		STATUS
9	Advocate for agencies to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation	Ongoing
10	Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure transportation resources are up-to-date	Ongoing
11	Provide information about transportation providers and resources in multiple lanugages	Ongoing
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	Ongoing
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	Ongoing

2018 DENTON COUNTY STRATEGIES	STATUS
1	In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit	Ongoing
2	Improve affordable public transportation to the VA clinic in Bonham	Ongoing
3	Improve regional access to medical appointments in Dallas County and Tarrant County	Under Development
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	Ongoing
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	Ongoing
6	Continue to conduct customer service focused training for transit agency employees	Ongoing
7	Conduct planning to assess needs and identify transportation solutions to improve access to education and education facilities	Ongoing
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	Ongoing
9	Advocate for agencies to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation	Ongoing

2018 DENTON COUNTY STRATEGIES		STATUS
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	Ongoing
11	Continue coordinating committee meetings to discuss transportation needs within Denton County	Ongoing
12	Create Partnerships between transit agencies, municipalities, and community organizations to increase the accessibility of bus stops and paths to transit	Ongoing

2018 ELLIS COUNTY STRATEGIES		STATUS
1	Improve local and regional access to medical appointments in Dallas County	Ongoing
2	Improve transportation options for local access to job and education opportunities	Under Development
3	Explore transportation services to increase affordability of fares for those most in need	Under Development
4	Expand transportation services to provide service for late-shift workers	No Progress Reported
5	Explore partnerships with local employers, medical centers, cities, and other agencies to funds additional transit services	Under Development
6	Conduct targeted marketing to local agencies about existing transportation resources, including transit resources for veterans	Ongoing
7	Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure public transportation resources are up-to-date	Ongoing
8	Create and maintain a coordinating committee to discuss ongoing transportation needs	Ongoing
9	Explore partnerships with existing transportation providers to reduce the number of transfers for regional trips	No Progress Reported
10	Establish consistent and effective driver recruitment and retention programs for public transportation services to address difficulties in retaining drivers in Ellis County	Under Development

2018 NAVARRO COUNTY STRATEGIES		STATUS
1	Improve local and regional access to medical appointments in Dallas County	Ongoing
2	Improve transportation options for local access to job and education opportunities	No Progress Reported
3	Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need	Under Development
4	Expand transportation services to provide services for late-shift workers in Dallas County	No Progress Reported
5	Explore partnerships with local employers, medical centers, cities, and other agencies to fund additional transit services	No Progress Reported
6	Conduct targeting marketing to local agencies about existing transportation resources, including transit resources for veterans	No Progress Reported
7	Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure transportation resources are up-to-date	Ongoing
8	Create and maintain a coordinating committee to discuss ongoing transportation needs	Ongoing
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	Under Development
10	Explore partnerships with existing transportation providers to reduce the number of transfers for regional trips	No Progress Reported

2018 ERATH COUNTY STRATEGIES		STATUS
1	Improve access to Veterans Affairs facilities in Dallas and Fort Worth	No Progress Reported
2	Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need	No Progress Reported
3	Add capacity to existing transit services 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	No Progress Reported
4	Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure public transportation resources are up-to-date	Ongoing
5	Conduct targeted marketing to local agencies about available transportation services and resources	Ongoing
6	Explore partnerships with local employers, cities, and other agencies to fund additional transit services	No Progress Reported
7	Conduct travel training to teach riders how to use public transportation	Ongoing

2018 HOOD COUNTY STRATEGIES		STATUS
1	Improve access to Veterans Affairs facilities in Dallas and Fort Worth	No Progress Reported
2	Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need	No Progress Reported
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	No Progress Reported
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	Under Development
5	Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure public transportation resources are up-to-date	Ongoing
6	Conduct targeted marketing to local agencies about available transportation services and resources	Ongoing
7	Explore partnerships with local employers, cities, and other agencies to fund additional transit services	No Progress Reported
8	Conduct travel training to teach riders how to use public transportation	Ongoing

2018 HUNT COUNTY STRATEGIES		STATUS
1	Improve awareness of available public transportation services and how to use them	Ongoing
2	Create and maintain a coordinating committee to discuss ongoing transportation needs	Ongoing
3	Improve regional connections to Dallas County and Collin County, particularly for medical appointments and work opportunities	Ongoing
4	Continue to explore partnerships with nonprofits, private companies, and others to increase service within the county	Under Development
5	Reduce scheduling pick-up windows	No Progress Reported

2018 JOHNSON COUNTY STRATEGIES		STATUS
1	Expand hours of operation in the evenings to accommodate alternate or third shifts, including coordination with employers	No Progress Reported
2	Explore partnerships with local employers, medical centers, cities, and other agencies to fund additional transit services	No Progress Reported
3	Develop additional action plans to increase transit services as well as review governance of City/County Transportation	Under Development
4	Create and maintain a coordinating committee to discuss ongoing transportation needs	Ongoing
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	Under Development
6	Work with an existing transit provider to improve the connection between Johnson County and Fort Worth for medical appointments and work	No Progress Reported
7	Work with an existing transit provider to improve the connection between Johnson County, downtown Fort Worth, and the airport	No Progress Reported
8	Develop partnerships with non-profits, employers, and other partners to make fares more affordable for very low-income individuals	Under Development
9	Educate local officials on available transit services, local demand, opportunities to leverage funding, and opportunities for economic development with transit	Ongoing
10	Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure transportation resources are up-to-date	Ongoing
11	Conduct targeted marketing to local agencies about existing transportation resources	Ongoing

2018 KAUFMAN COUNTY STRATEGIES		STATUS
1	Increase access to job training and job opportunities, particularly for: 1. Rural residents 2. Early morning shifts	Ongoing
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	Ongoing
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	Ongoing
4	Advocate for agencies to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation	Under Development
5	Conduct travel training or train-the-trainer that covers topics such as: 1. Available service, 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	Ongoing
6	Continue to conduct driver safety and sensitivity training to improve the rider's experience	Ongoing
7	Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure public transportation resources are up-to-date	Ongoing

2018 PALO PINTO COUNTY STRATEGIES		STATUS
1	Improve access to: 1. Mental health appointments, 2. Social service appointments, 3. Medical appointments, 4. Job training and job opportunities	Ongoing
2	Improve the ride and wait times on transit services to increase the feasibility and acceptability of transit for everyday trips	Under Development
3	Create and maintain a coordinating committee to discuss ongoing transportation needs	Ongoing
4	Explore partnerships with local employers, medical centers, cities, and other agencies to fund additional transit services	Ongoing
5	Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need	Under Development
6	Advocate for agencies to integrate funding source to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation	Ongoing
7	Conduct targeted marketing to local agencies about existing transportation resources	Ongoing
8	Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure public transportation resources are up-to-date	Ongoing

2018 PARKER COUNTY STRATEGIES		STATUS
1	Improve access to: 1. Mental health appointments, 2. Social service appointments, 3. Medical appointment, 4. Job training and job opportunities	Ongoing
2	Improve the ride and wait times on transit services to increase the feasibility and acceptability of transit for everyday trips	Under Development
3	Create and maintain a coordinating committee to discuss ongoing transportation needs	Ongoing
4	Explore partnerships with local employers, medical centers, cities, and other agencies to fund additional transit services	Ongoing
5	Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need	Under Development
6	Advocate for agencies to integrate funding source to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation	Ongoing
7	Conduct targeted marketing to local agencies about existing transportation resources	Ongoing
8	Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure public transportation resources are up-to-date	Ongoing

2018 ROCKWALL COUNTY STRATEGIES	STATUS
1	Improve access to: 1. Medical appointments in Rockwall, 2. Mental wellness clinics, 3. YMCA, 4. Grocery stores, 5. Texas Workforce Commission in Dallas	Ongoing
2	Create and maintain a coordinating committee to discuss ongoing transportation needs	Ongoing
3	Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need	Under Development
4	Improve transit connections across county borders, particularly for medical appointments and access to education	Under Development
5	Coordinate with local residences, businesses, medical centers and other organizations to group trips to improve efficiency and the rider's experience	Under Development
6	Advocate for agencies to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation	Under Development
7	Continue to conduct targeted marketing to local agencies about existing transportation resources	Ongoing
8	Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure public transportation resources are up-to-date	Ongoing

2018 SOMERVELL COUNTY STRATEGIES	STATUS
1	Improve access to Veterans Affairs facilities in Dallas and Fort Worth	No Progress Reported
2	Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need	Under Development
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	Under Development
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	Under Development
5	Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure public transportation resources are up-to-date	Ongoing
6	Conduct targeted marketing to local agencies about available transportation services and resources	Ongoing
7	Explore partnerships with local employers, cities, and other agencies to fund additional transit services	No Progress Reported
8	Conduct travel training to teach riders how to use public transportation	No Progress Reported

2018 TARRANT COUNTY STRATEGIES	STATUS
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	Ongoing
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 provider, 4. Coordinate trip scheduling and service information infrastructure	Ongoing
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 skill development to engage employers, employer associations, community partners, medical practitioners and transportation providers	Ongoing
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	Under Development

2018 WISE COUNTY STRATEGIES		STATUS
1	Improve access to: 1. Dialysis appointments, 2. Out-of-county medical appointments, particularly in Tarrant County and Dallas County, 3. Medical facilities in the evenings and early mornings	No Progress Reported
2	Develop partnerships with non-profits, employers, medical facilities, and other partners to improve access to local and regional destinations	No Progress Reported
3	Explore partnerships to provide additional transportation for needs other than medical or work	Ongoing
4	Continue to conduct targeted marketing to local agencies about existing transportation resources	Ongoing
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	No Progress Reported
6	Advocate for transit agencies to integrate funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase the availability of affordable public transportation	Under Development
7	Establish consistent and effective driver recruitment and retention programs for public transportation services to address difficulties in retaining drivers in Wise County	Under Development
8	Work with 2-1-1 at least twice a year to ensure public transportation resources are up-to-date	Ongoing
9	Contract with local agencies with a language program to provide translated transit info (over the phone, online, print, etc.)	No Progress Reported
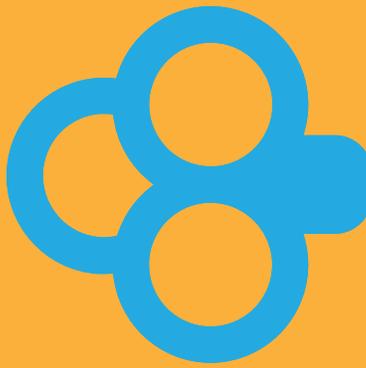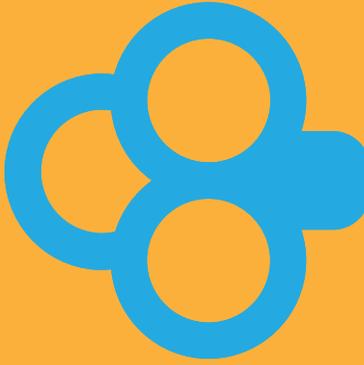
GET-A-RIDE GUIDE

TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENT TOOL
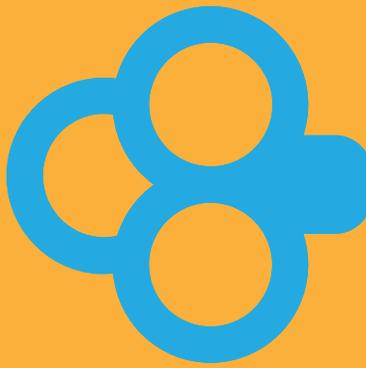
DATA AND ANALYSIS

OUTREACH AND SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Access North Texas				
2022 Virtual Outreach Meetings				
County	**Meeting #1**	**Meeting #2**	**Meeting #3***	**Total Attendees**
Collin	June 9	June 10	June 12	6
Dallas	June 29	July 1	June 26	7
Denton	June 23	June 24	June 26	10
Ellis & Navarro	May 19	May 20	N/A	3
Hood & Somervell & Erath	June 16	June 17	N/A	5
Hunt	April 27	April 29	N/A	4
Johnson	May 5	May 6	N/A	10
Kaufman	July 14	July 15	N/A	5
Parker & Palo Pinto	May 26	May 27	N/A	2
Rockwall	May 12	May 13	N/A	5
Tarrant	July 7	July 8	July 10	5
Wise	June 2	June 3	N/A	3
Kickoff Meeting	April 19	N/A	N/A	19
*Additional Meeting Held in Largest Counties				