

CHAPTER 07



# 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

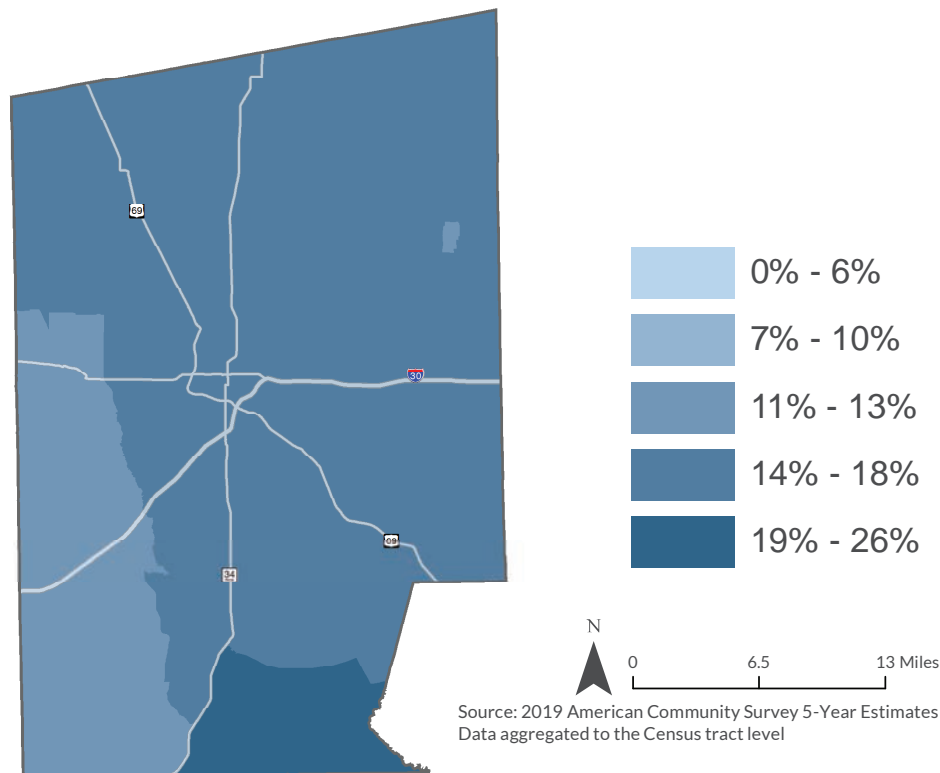
Demographic data in Hunt County was used to identify populations that may have a high potential need for public transportation. The population of Hunt County has increased by 6.9% between 2015 and 2019, which is less than the 16-county regional growth of 8.0% in that same time-period. In accordance with 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



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.

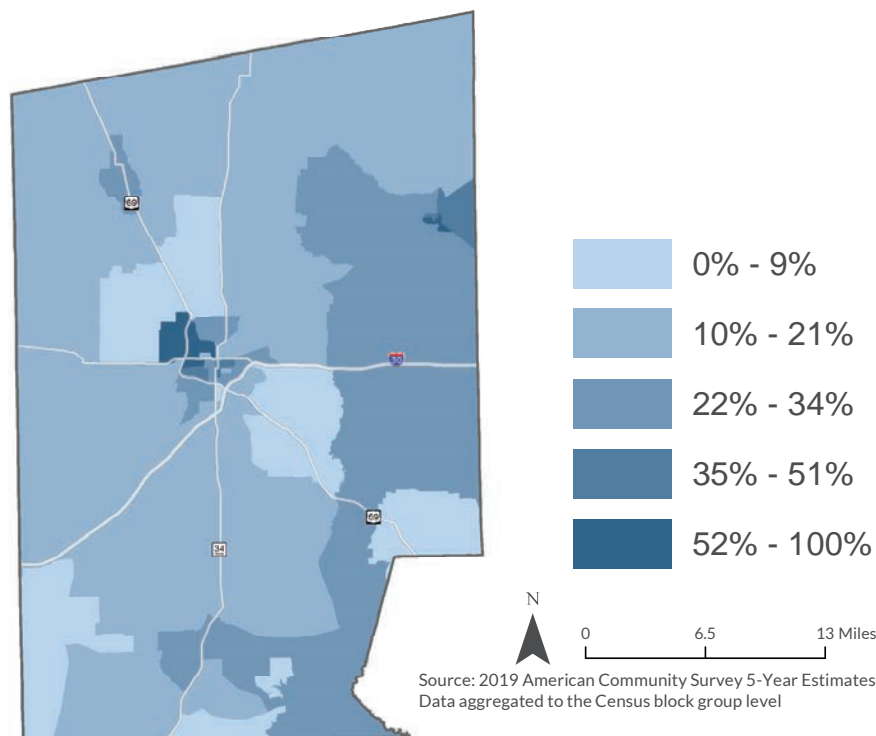
A transportation survey was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper in English or Spanish. This survey collected input on public transportation in the region. The survey was also available online for organizations and agencies that work with transit-dependent populations. In 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



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

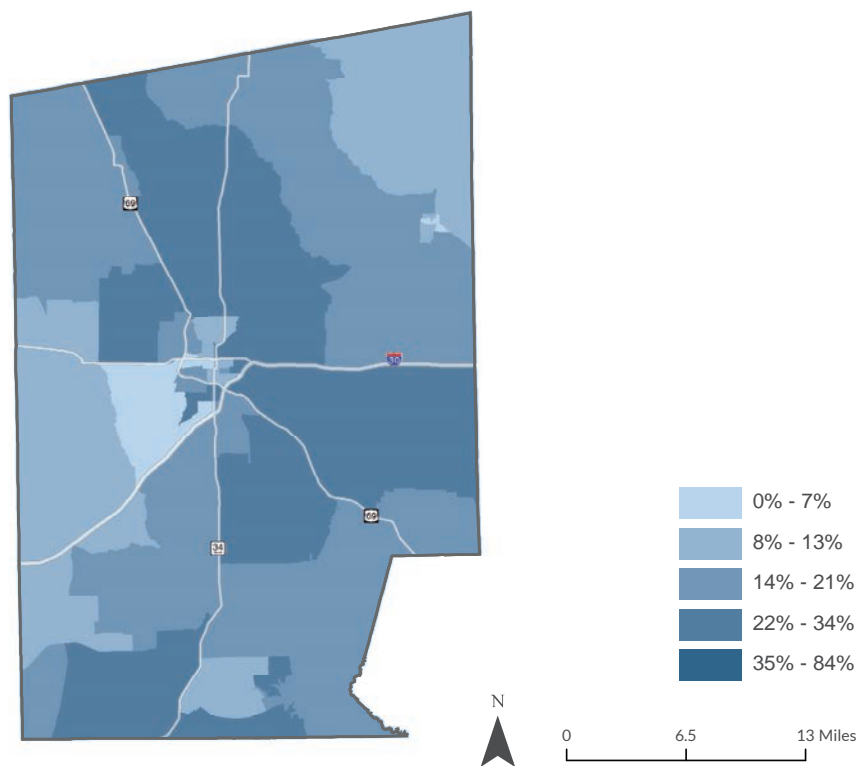
gained through outreach meetings helped with the development of regional goals and the prioritized strategies for Hunt County.

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



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

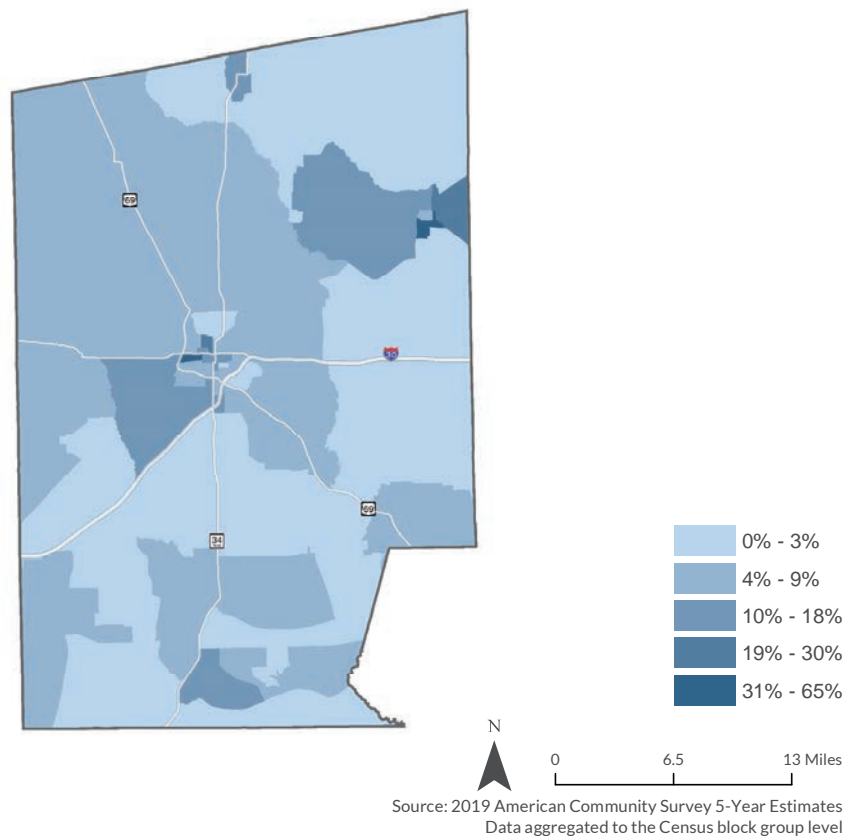
The largest census block areas within Hunt County where all three variables are above the regional percentage are mostly along the eastern half of the county. The largest cluster falls within the area northeast of Greenville which includes the surrounding area around Commerce. Other areas with a concentration 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.

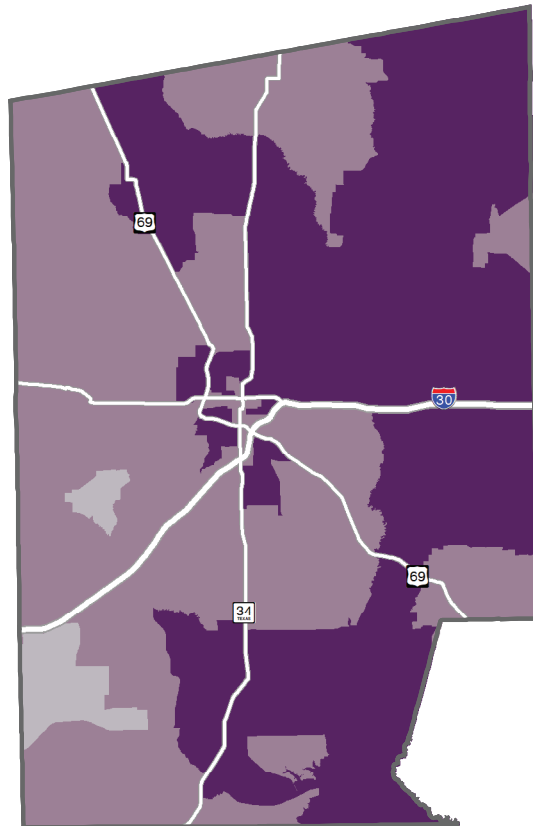
### Development of Strategies

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



# Hunt 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 9 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.

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
<b>Plan and Develop Transportation Options by Assessing Community Need and Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> <li>B) Invest in programs that facilitate transportation trips to medical and healthcare appointments</li> <li>C) Launch a mobility toolbox to educate on and promote public transportation options such as fixed route, demand-respond, on-demand services, etc.</li> </ul>



## 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](http://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](http://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](http://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.