

Executive Summary

Denton County *Transit Study*

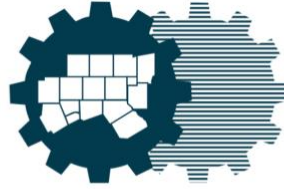


North Central Texas
Council of Governments



CAMBRIDGE
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DENTON COUNTY TRANSIT STUDY



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Prepared in cooperation with the Regional Transportation Council, NCTCOG, and the Federal Transit Administration. The contents of this report reflect the views of the authors who are responsible for the opinions, findings, and conclusions presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Regional Transportation Council, NCTCOG, or the Federal Transit Administration.

Cooperating Agencies and Providers

- Denton County Transit Authority • SPAN • Dallas Area Rapid Transit
- Federal Transit Administration • Texas Department of Transportation
- Trinity Metro • US Department of Transportation

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Chapter 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

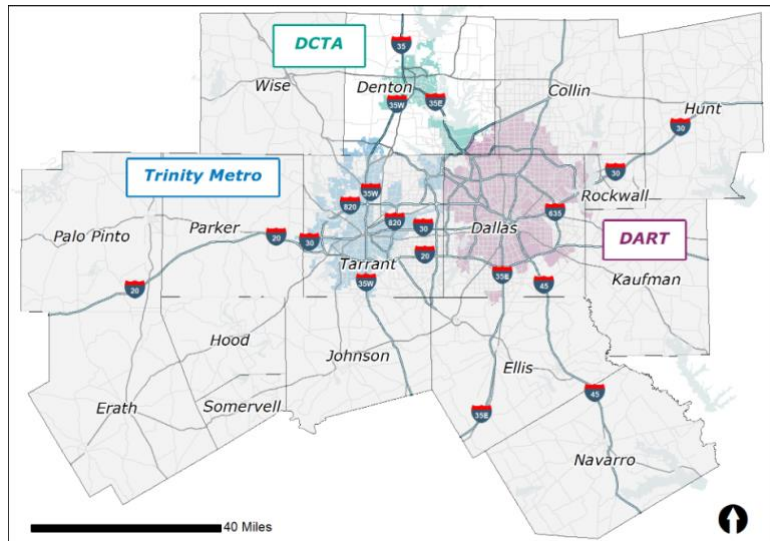
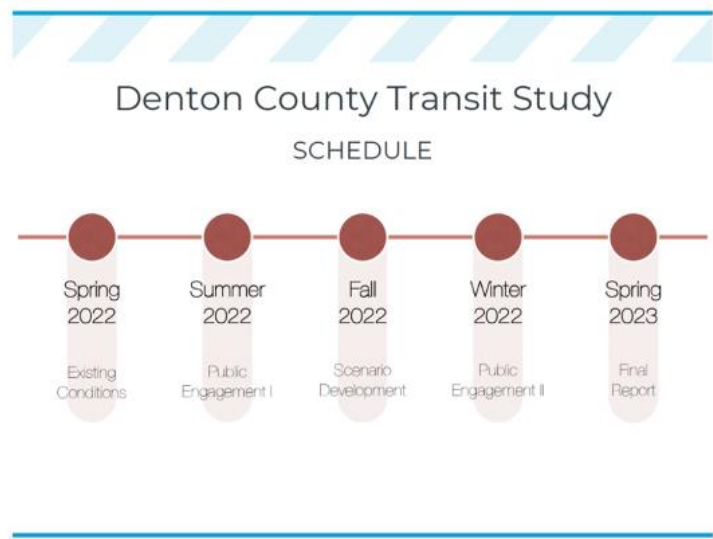
INTRODUCTION

The Denton County Transit Study was conducted by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) on behalf of the county and its municipalities. The purpose of the study is to explore the transit and shared mobility needs of those who reside in municipalities without general-access transit service.

This document provides an overview of public involvement, existing conditions, scenario development and funding and development tasks associated with the study. The Executive Summary and subsequent chapters may be viewed as independent, stand-alone chapters or as one complete document.

Initiated in March 2022, the Denton County Transit Study aimed to develop a comprehensive public transportation plan, particularly for cities and portions of the county that are not members of the Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA). Additional service providers include Span, which provides transportation and home-delivered meals to homebound and disabled residents living outside the DCTA service area, as well as the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) and Trinity Metro.

Study efforts focused on strategic implementation and coordination with other planning efforts. Furthermore, the study analyzed existing conditions, identified transit options, funding and implementation strategies, governance structure and the institutional delivery approach of recommended services or projects, and potential impacts on the community. A Transit Vision, along with specific goals and objectives, were developed that will help guide the transit planning process, recommendations, and implementation.



Chapter 3 EXISTING CONDITIONS

While the primary mode for traveling in Denton County is by automobile, some areas of the county have transit options, especially in the City of Denton. The Existing Conditions Report documents:

- The demand for mobility services in the region
- The state of existing services
- The gap between existing and available mobility services

Demand for transit services. Most trips within Denton County are short and local, traveling within immediate or between adjacent communities, although many travel to adjacent counties for commute purposes.

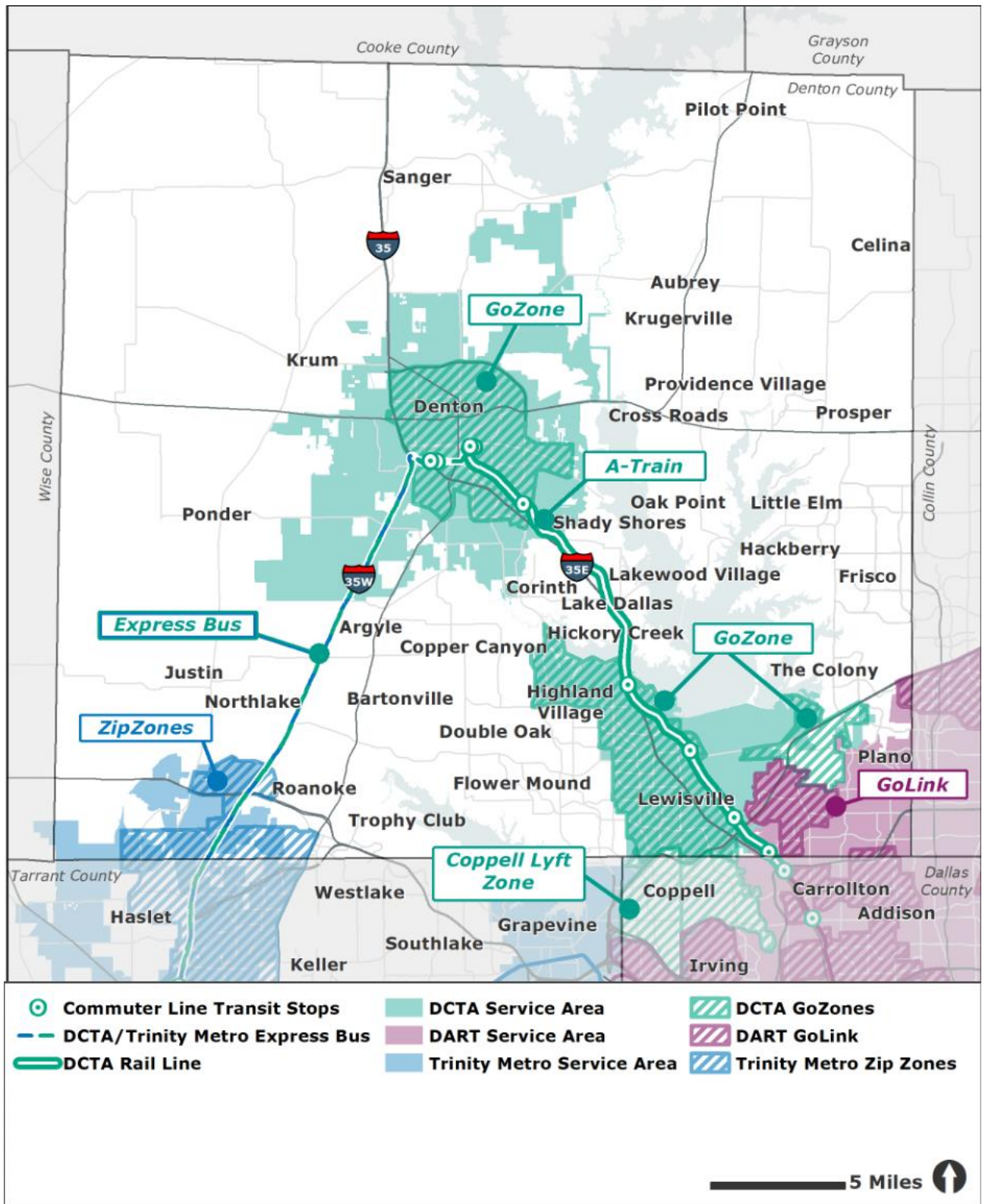
Existing Transit Service. Several overlapping and distinct transit services exist in Denton County. The major services includes fixed-route services in the city proper, commuter services between Denton and the DFW metropolitan area, and local on-demand services.

Gaps between Existing Demand and Services. Across the county, there are several outstanding gaps between available transit services and transit demand.

EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

- Major population areas, such as the Colony-Frisco sector, and areas of employment, such as Airport-Ponder sector, lack any transit services.
- There are key gaps in service for certain vulnerable groups that fall outside of Span and DCTA paratransit/on-demand services.
- Travelers need both local services that can help them reach key destinations and connecting services to the major commuter lines that travel outside of the county.
- Trips starting/ending outside of Denton County are longer, with most of these trips ending in Dallas County.
- Fixed routes services are concentrated within the City of Denton and see high rates of utilization and operational efficiency.
- On-demand services have seen increased ridership since 2021, making this a promising mode to deploy in similar areas. Rail services in comparison consume a large portion of the DCTA budget when compared to its ridership.

EXISTING SERVICE



Chapter 4 SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

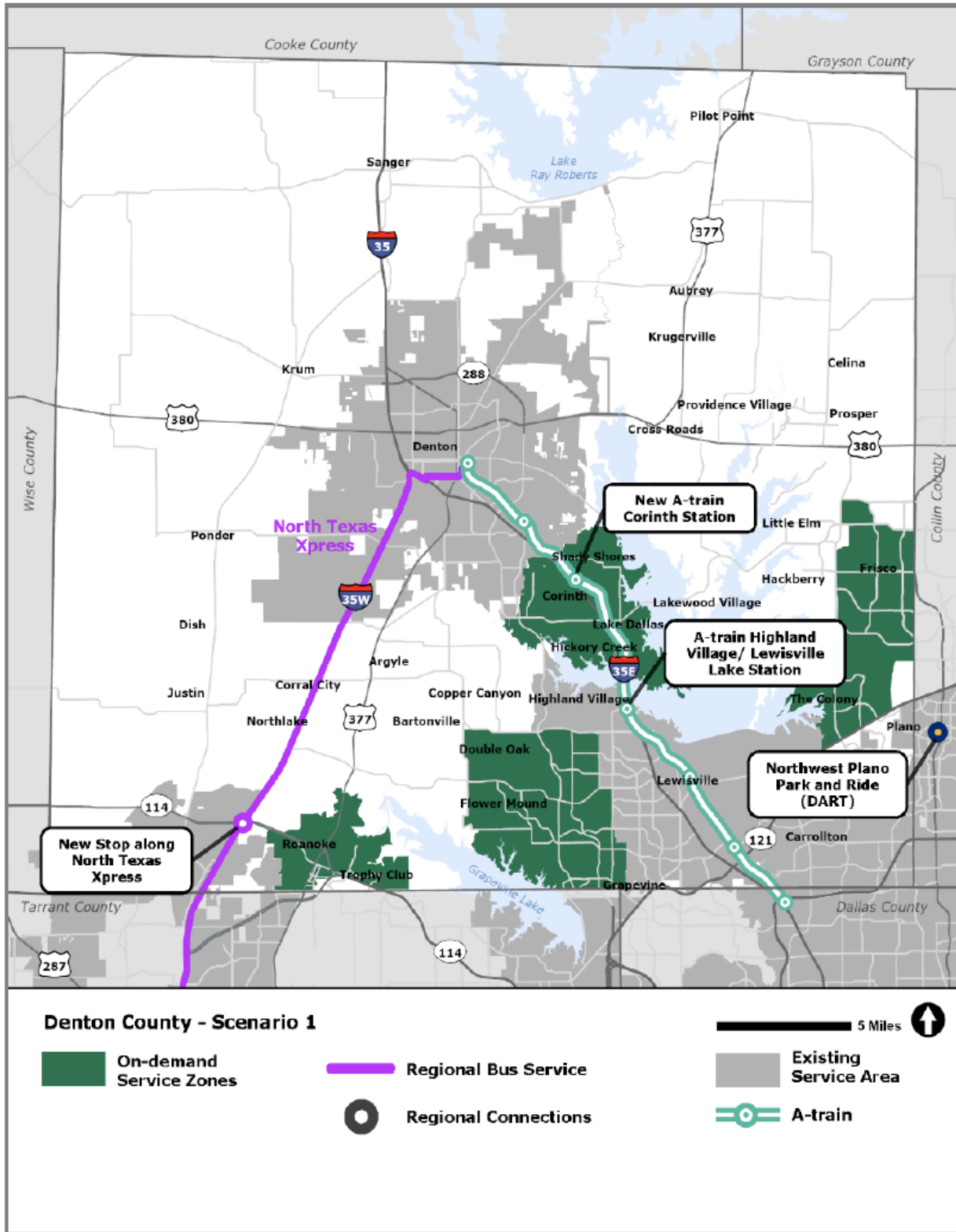
Countywide scenarios were developed based on a per-capita annual operations and maintenance budget. The Scenario Development Report establishes the transit market across Denton County, the development process for three additive scenarios, and provides initial operating and maintenance costs for each scenario.

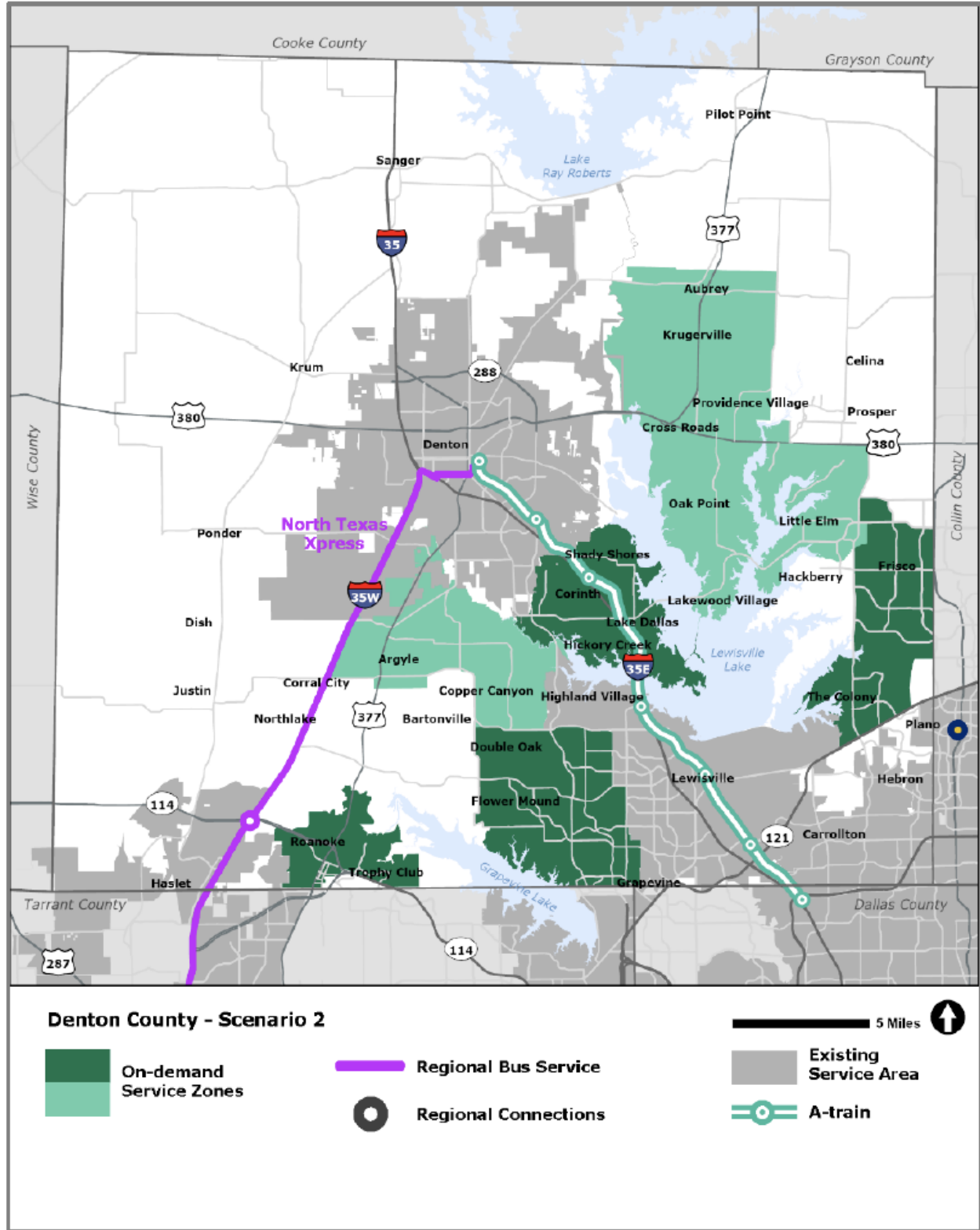
Examining the Transit Market in Denton County. Transit is viable in many areas across the county, particularly in areas south near Grapevine Lake and east on both sides of Lewisville Lake. The proposed scenarios establish on-demand service areas and expanded fixed-route services across Denton County. Each scenario builds upon the previous scenario to offer more expansive and connected service, at the expense of high costs and jurisdictional complexities. The scenarios start by serving areas identified as high needs, then builds upon providing service to additional areas with medium then low needs.

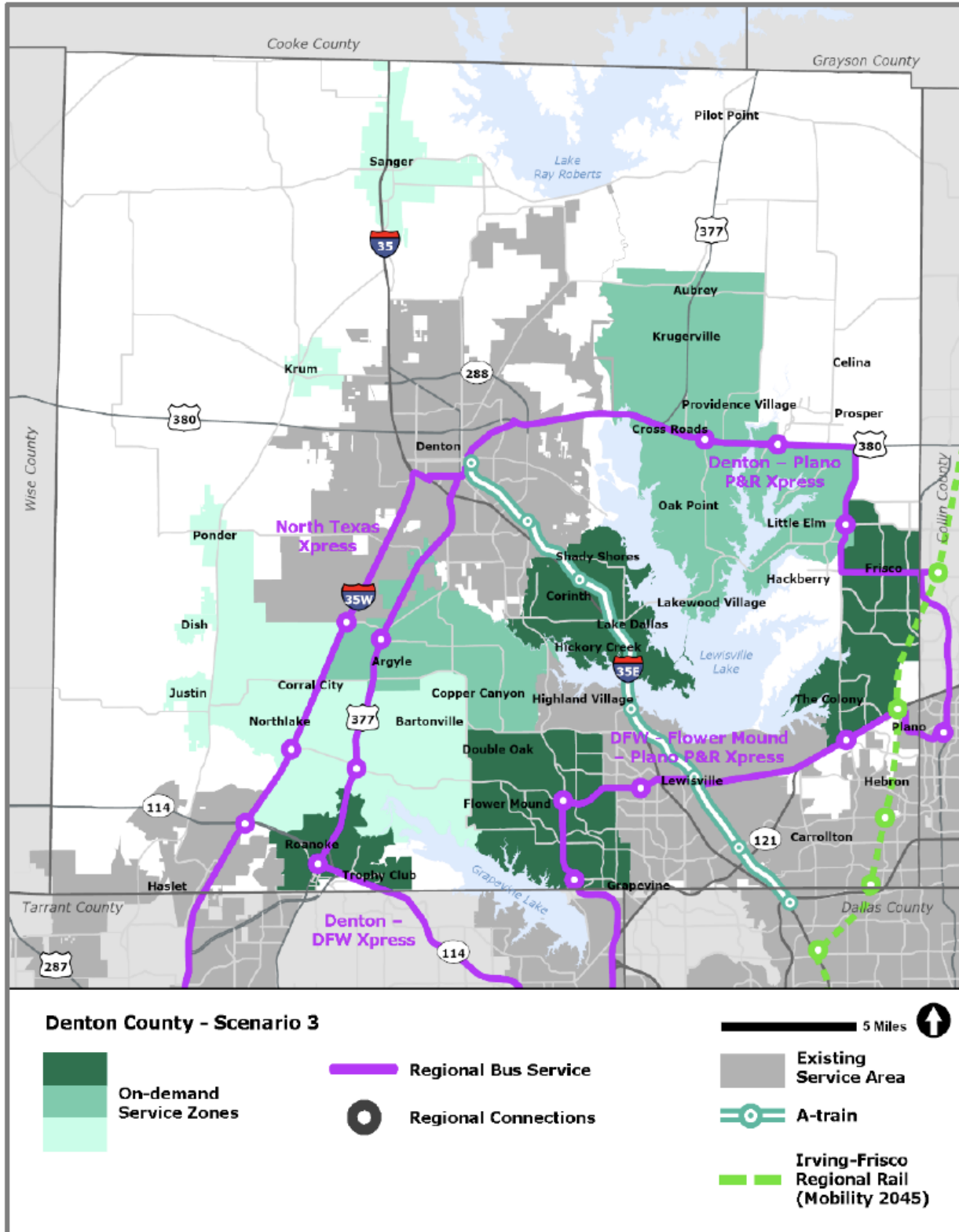
Service Type	Scenario Element	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Local	High Need Areas	✓	✓	✓
	Medium Need Areas		✓	✓
	Low Need Areas			✓
Regional	Existing Fixed Route Connectivity	✓	✓	✓
	New Fixed Route Connectivity			✓

Operating and Maintenance Costs. The report defines the service statistics needed to provide the services proposed in each scenario.

Proposed Transit Services	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3A	Scenario 3B	
On-demand Low Estimate and Regional Bus Services	Peak Vehicles	28	37	56	67
	Annual Revenue Hours	111,748	163,912	263,270	319,480
	Annual O&M Costs (2022\$)	\$6,325,000	\$9,000,000	\$19,060,000	\$26,647,000
On-demand High Estimate and Regional Bus Services	Peak Vehicles	49	64	83	94
	Annual Revenue Hours	179,858	264,796	367,402	423,612
	Annual O&M Costs (2022\$)	\$9,816,000	\$14,169,000	\$24,395,000	\$31,982,000







Chapter 5 FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Funding and Implementation Report provides an analysis of funding options for transit, an estimate of need for non-fare revenues to operate transit and guidance to establish and manage on-demand transit and fixed-route transit in Denton County. The report specifically focuses on the regions of Denton County not currently served by transit and recommends near-term improvements to support the goals and objectives of other medium- and long-range planning efforts, including *Mobility 2045*, the region’s long-range transportation plan.

FUNDING OPTIONS	
MUNICIPAL SALES TAX	
LOCAL FUNDING	Development fees Public improvement districts Property assessments
STATE FUNDING	
Texas Medical Transportation Program	
FEDERAL FUNDING	

Funding Options. Local funding options for transit service are limited in their ability to sustain transit operating costs. Revenue sources including sales tax, general funding options, and value capture were evaluated for their potential to meet funding needs.

Financial Needs. The report analyzes on-demand and fixed-route service operating costs and fare revenues using the Low Ridership and High Ridership levels to identify gaps between fare revenues and operating

costs.

Service Profiles and Models. The report identifies and discusses components of transit service needed to build a service profile. The report also defines four service models for service delivery.

Implementation Process. While selecting Service Profiles and Service Models are unique to the needs and capacity of each municipality, a general Implementation Process provides guidance for evaluating options and making choices.

This guidance consists of three main phases.

SERVICE MODELS	
Joining or purchasing service from a transit provider	
Using turnkey contract for service operation	
Contracting out service or operation elements	
Directly operating a service	

THREE MAIN PHASES	
Planning	
Delivery	
Management	

The Planning phase consists of tasks for determining what service to offer, and how to fund and to operate it. The Delivery phase consists of tasks for promoting service and defining success. The Management phase consists of tasks for providing and monitoring service to determine if it is meeting its goals.

With local and regional transit demand, Denton County has the opportunity for several expanded on-demand and express bus services to complement existing services provided in

and around the county. Similar services in Dallas County and Tarrant County prove the capability for these types of services to work in similar areas in Denton County.

FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

- **Only five municipalities in Denton County have not reached the existing statutory limitation on raising local option sales taxes above 2.0%.**
- **While municipalities have greater discretion in setting development fees and property taxes, only three municipalities would be able to fund a 20% local match for Federal operating subsidies.**
- **State funding options are limited in their ability to provide operating support for transit, although Transportation Development Credits and the Texas Medical Transportation Program for Medicaid recipients offer some potential.**
- **Federal funding options for both capital and operating costs are more readily available, and several Texas agencies have had success with securing Federal competitive grants in recent years.**
- **An estimated benchmark of local revenues equivalent to a 0.5% sales tax levied in each municipality could help determine how much of the gap can be filled with local revenues.**