

ACCESS NORTH TEXAS

REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PLAN
FOR NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS

Prepared by the North Central Texas Council of Governments

Final March 2018

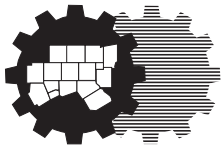


What is NCTCOG?

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

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

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



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

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NCTCOG's Department of Transportation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

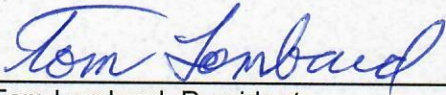
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED THAT:

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

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

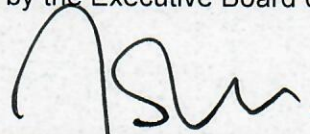
Section 3. Access North Texas will be transmitted to the Texas Department of Transportation and other impacted agencies.

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



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

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



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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTERS

1. Executive Summary	1.1
2. Collin County	2.1
3. Dallas County	3.1
4. Denton County	4.1
5. Ellis County	5.1
6. Erath County	6.1
7. Hood County and Somervell County	7.1
8. Hunt County	8.1
9. Johnson County	9.1
10. Kaufman County	10.1
11. Navarro County	11.1
12. Palo Pinto County and Parker County	12.1
13. Rockwall County	13.1
14. Tarrant County	14.1
15. Wise County	15.1

LIST OF FIGURES

Span Transit Vehicle Delivery	1.3
Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	1.4
Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool Populations	1.4
Distribution of Access North Texas Stakeholder Poll Responses, January – July 2017	1.6
Collin County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	2.2
Northeast Dallas Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	3.2
Northwest Dallas Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	3.4
Southeast Dallas County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	3.6
Southwest Dallas County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	3.7
Dallas County Transportation Providers	3.9
Denton County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	4.2
Ellis County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	5.2
Erath County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	6.2
Hood and Somervell Counties Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	7.2
Hunt County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	8.2

Johnson County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	9.2
Kaufman County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	10.2
Navarro County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	11.2
Palo Pinto County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	12.2
Parker County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	12.4
Rockwall County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	13.2
Northeast Tarrant County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	14.2
Northwest Tarrant County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	14.4
Southwest Tarrant County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	14.5
Southeast Tarrant County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	14.6
Tarrant County Transportation Providers Access Domains by Priority	14.8 14.9
Wise County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	15.2

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Plan Requirements	A.1
Appendix B: Regional Reports (online only)	B.1
1. Access North Texas (2013): Summary and Status	B1.1
2. Summary of Limited English Proficiency Population	B2.1
3. Public Transportation Toolbox	B3.1
4. Private Carriers	B4.1
5. Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool	B5.1
6. Transportation Poll	B6.1
Appendix C: County-by-County Supplemental Information (online only)	C.1
1. Collin County	C-Collin1.1
2. Dallas County	C-Dallas2.1
3. Denton County	C-Denton3.1
4. Ellis County	C-Ellis4.1
5. Erath County	C-Erath5.1
6. Hood County and Somervell County	C-Hood&Somervell6.1
7. Hunt County	C-Hunt7.1
8. Johnson County	C-Johnson8.1
9. Kaufman County	C-Kaufman9.1
10. Navarro County	C-Navarro10.1
11. Palo Pinto County and Parker County	C-PaloPinto&Parker11.1
12. Rockwall County	C-Rockwall12.1
13. Tarrant County	C-Tarrant13.1
14. Wise County	C-Wise14.1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

CURRENT TRENDS

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

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

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

PROGRESS CONTINUES

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

New Transit Service in Hutchins

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

Denton Community Health Council

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

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

Connecting Seniors to Medical Services

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

Connecting Hunt County to Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)

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

Cooperative Vehicle Procurement

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

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

SPAN TRANSIT DELIVERY VEHICLE

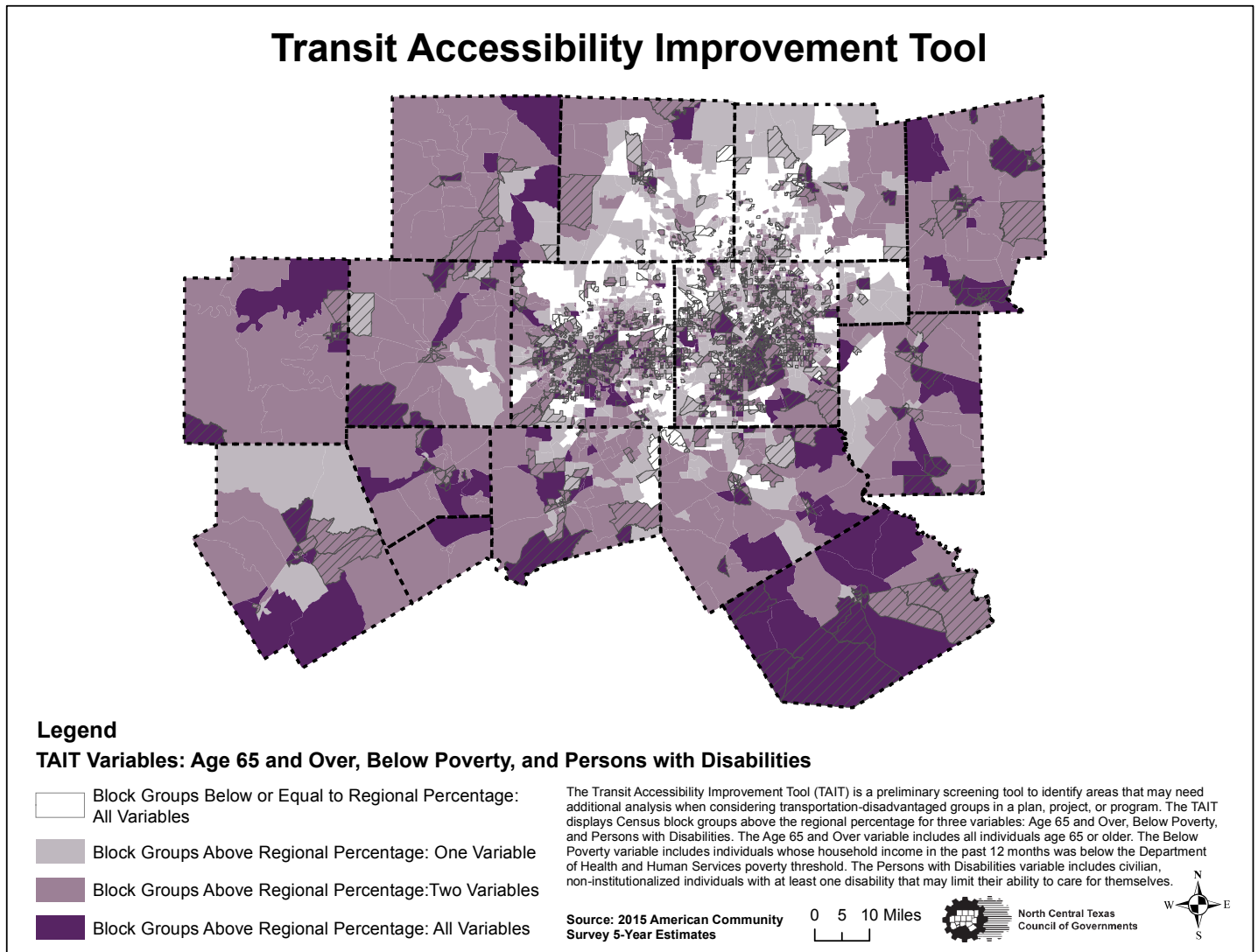


CURRENT NEEDS

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

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

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



TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENT TOOL POPULATIONS

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

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

OUTREACH EFFORTS

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

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

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

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Regional Strategies for Coordinated Public Transportation

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

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

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

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

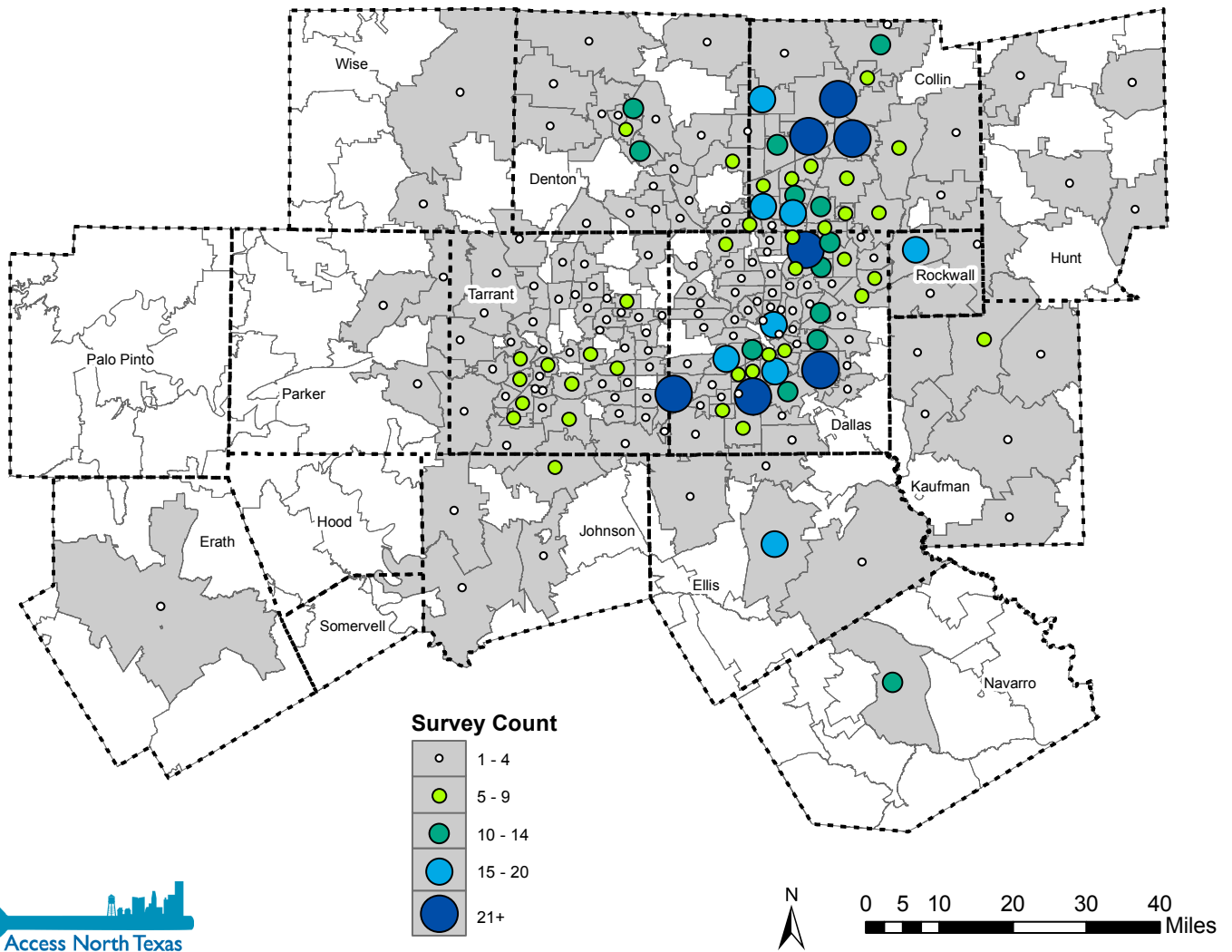
Regional Strategy 5 Work towards uniform, regional fares to simplify and reduce the cost of regional trips for riders

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

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

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

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



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

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

Implementing the Plan

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

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

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

Characteristics of a highly competitive project:

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

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

CHAPTER THREE

DALLAS COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

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

PROCESS

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

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

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

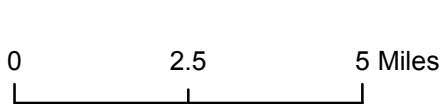
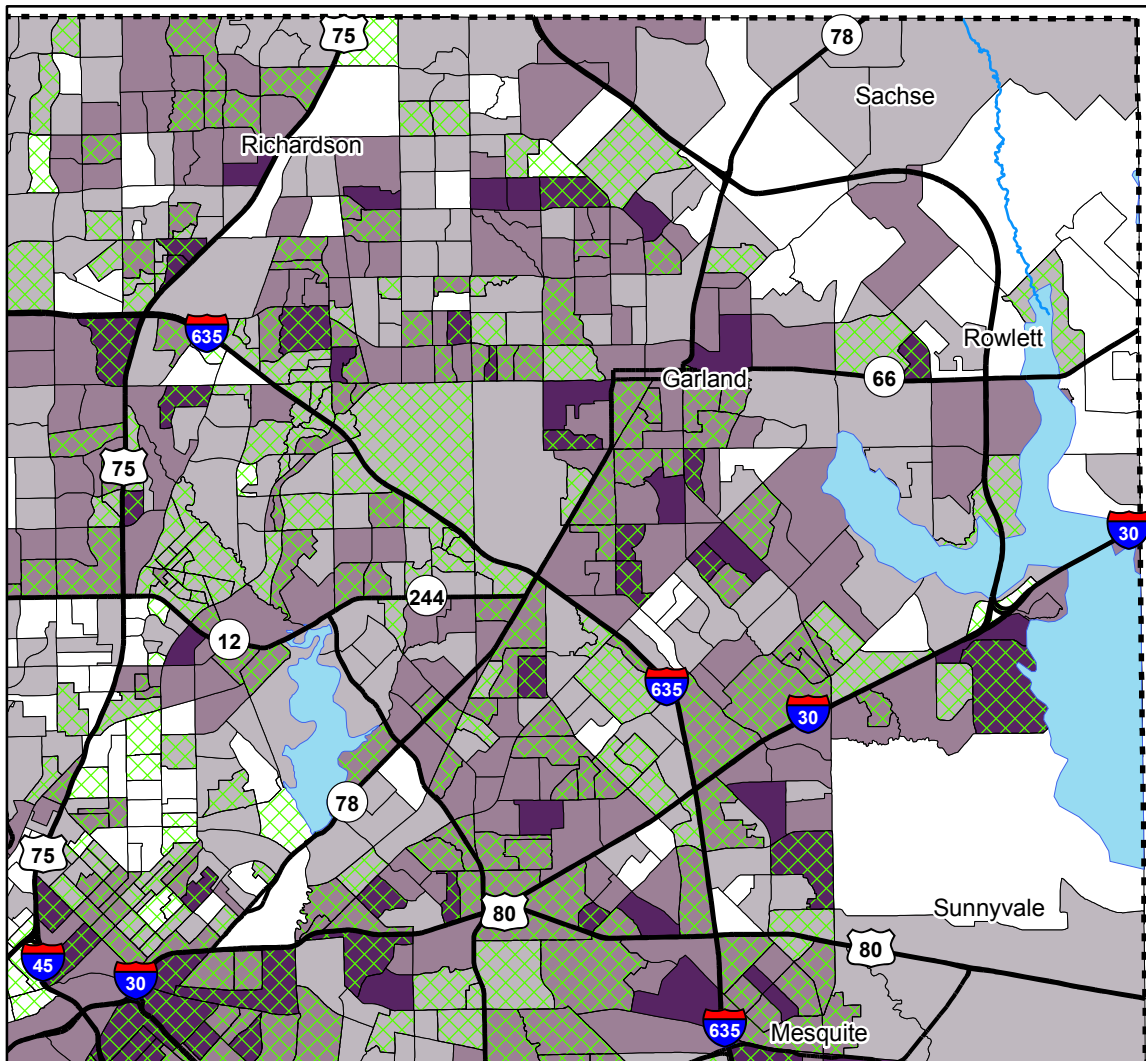
RESEARCH

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

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

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






Northeast Dallas County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



Dallas County



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

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

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

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



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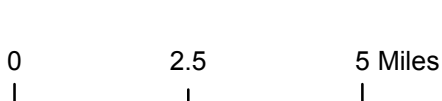
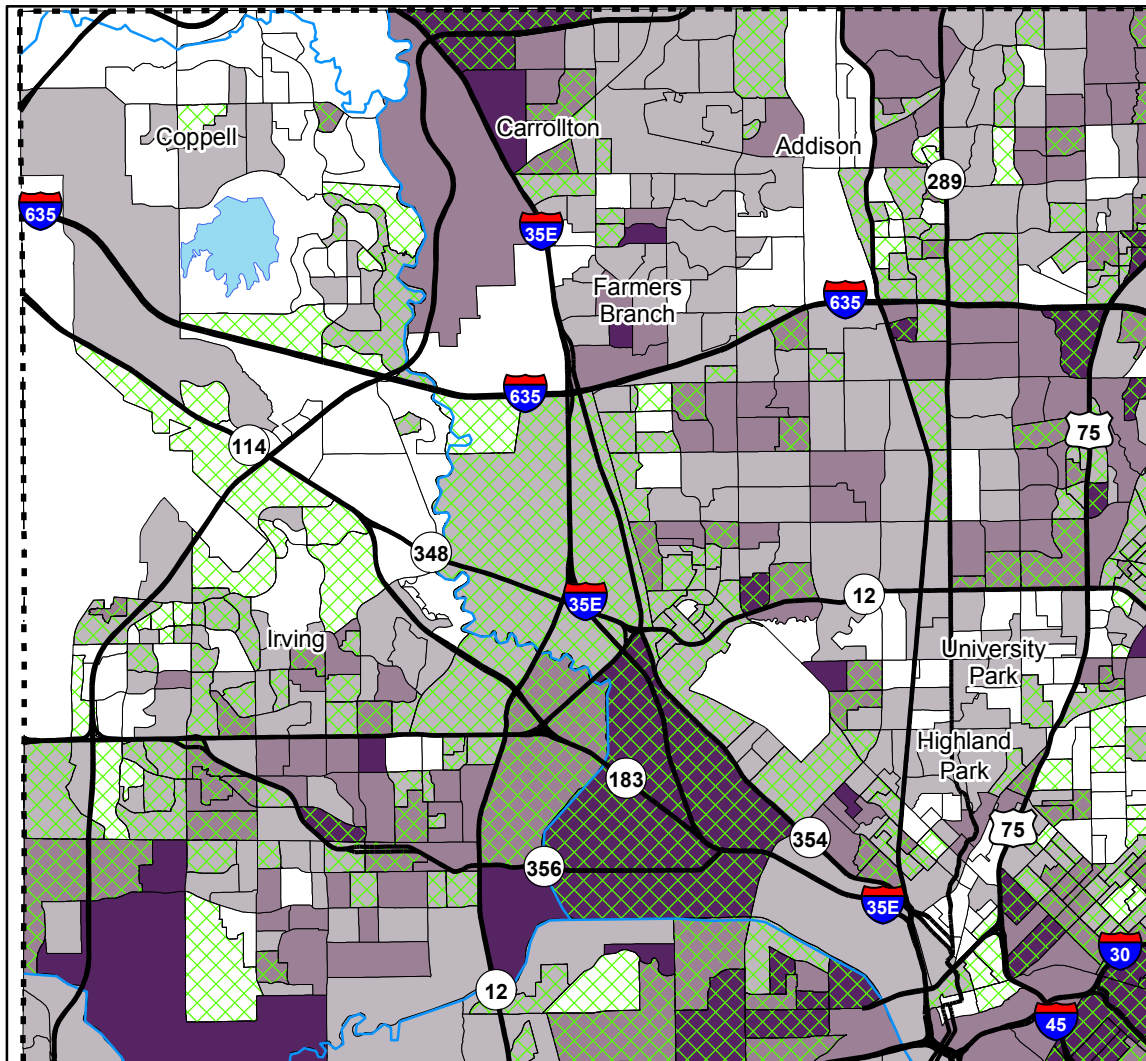
of the I635 corridor near Richardson and Garland, along the I30 corridor, near downtown Dallas, and in Mesquite. Areas with two variables above the regional percentage are also distributed throughout the northeast quadrant of the county. The western part of the quadrant and in Richardson predominantly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

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

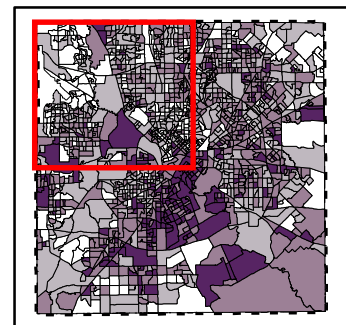
the northwest quadrant of Dallas County are persons age 65 and over and persons with disabilities. The two variables above the regional percentage in some census block groups along SH 289 and US 75, as well as many in the southern part of the quadrant, and south of Irving are persons below the poverty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

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






Northwest Dallas County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



Dallas County



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

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

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

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

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

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

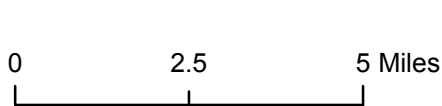
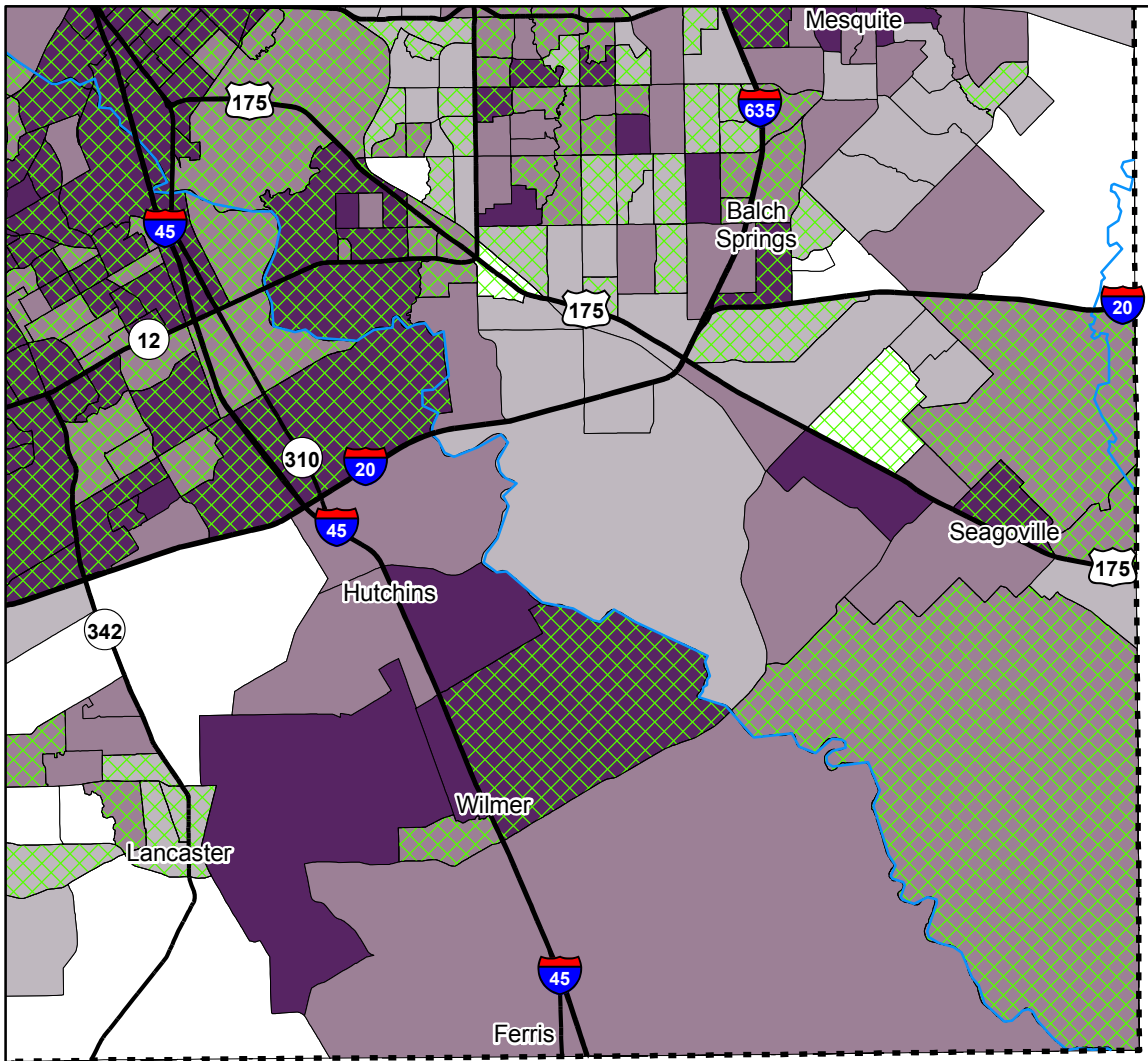
and western parts of southwest Dallas County are the primary areas where block groups have only one variable above the regional percentage. Block groups in Grand Prairie, Cockrell Hill, east of US 67 in Cedar Hill, along the SH 180 corridor, and near Lancaster are primarily persons below the poverty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

Additional Demographic and Commuter Information

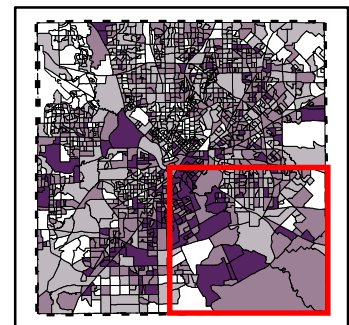
Dallas County continues to experience a steady amount of growth. According to the American Community Survey's 2015 5-year estimates, since the 2010 Census, Dallas County's population has increased by 4.9%. In comparison, the 16-county region has grown 6.3% in that same time period. Public transportation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

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

Southeast Dallas County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



Dallas County



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

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

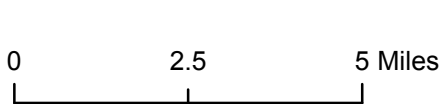
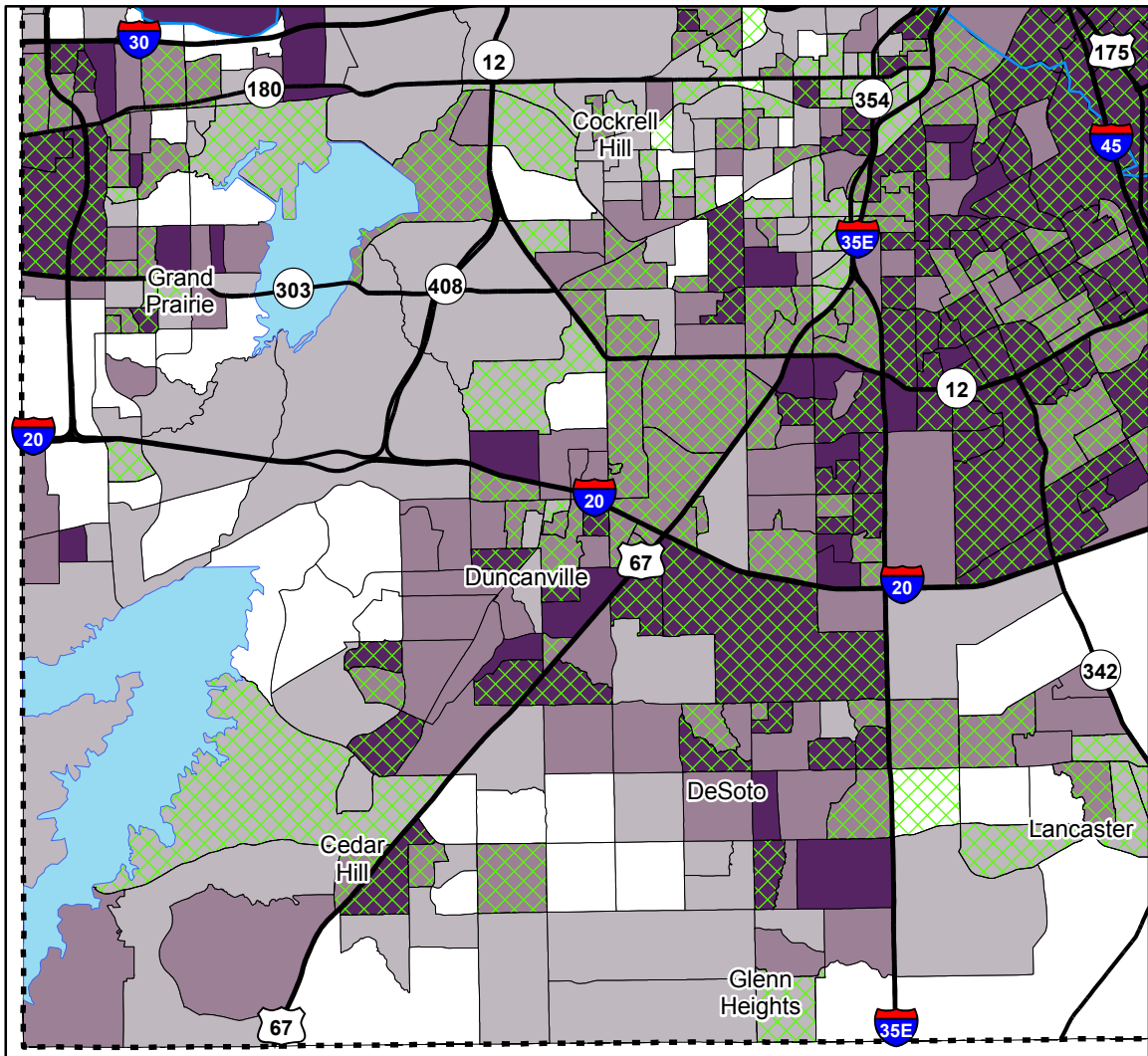
The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: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

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



North Central Texas
Council of Governments






Southwest Dallas County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



Dallas County



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

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

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

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

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

Transportation Resources

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

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

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

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

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

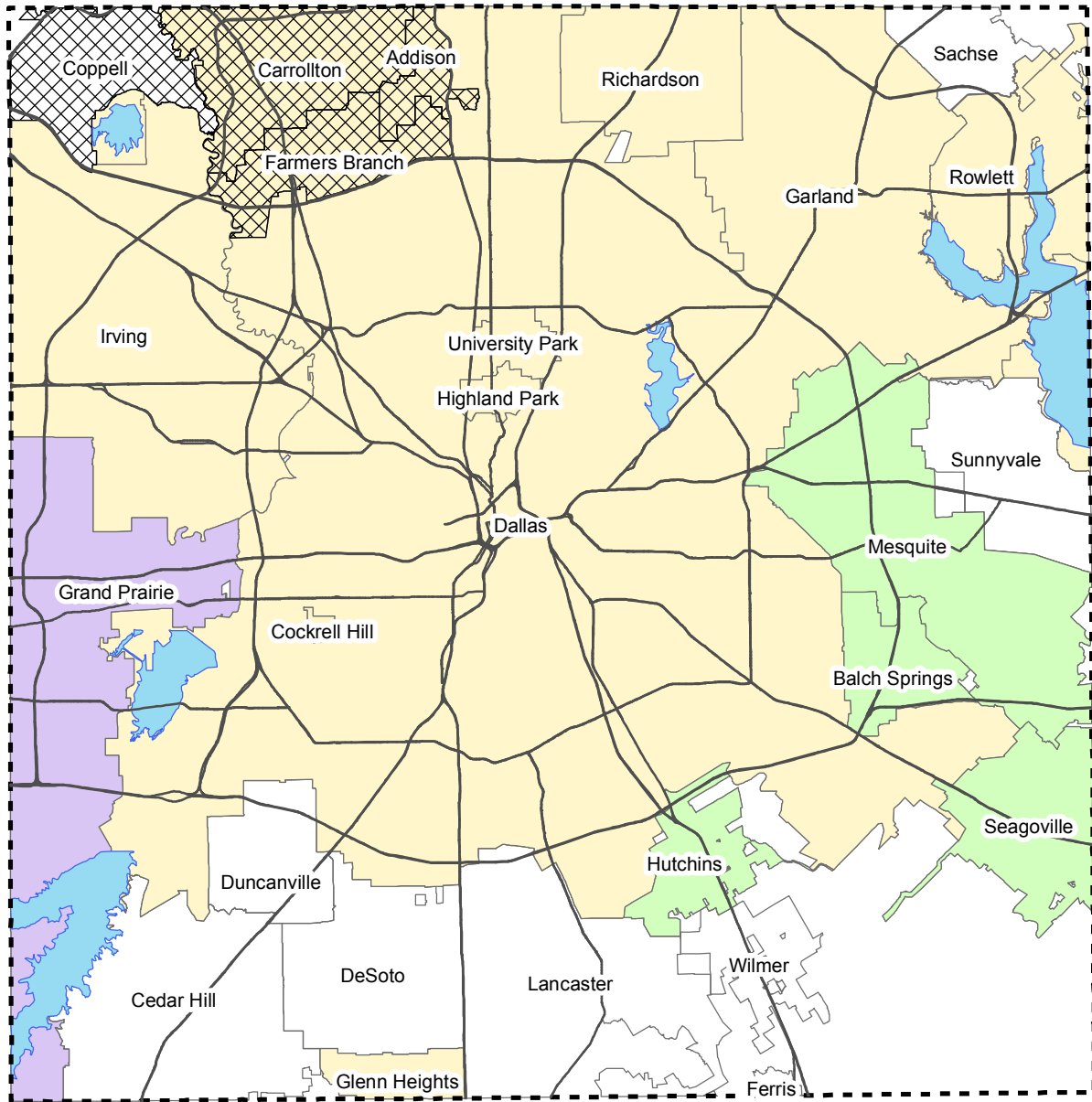
OUTREACH MEETINGS





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

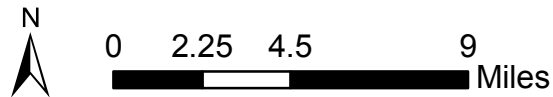
Following a general welcome and presentation about public transit within the county, staff led an interactive keypad polling session to instigate discussion of transportation issues with attendees. Based on discussion question answers, community members prioritized current issues in the county and re-prioritized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

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

Dallas County Transportation Providers



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



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

TRANSPORTATION POLL

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

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

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

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

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

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

Prioritized Strategies

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Regional Strategies for Coordinated Public Transportation

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

Regional Strategy 1 In areas with no public transit

service, assess community needs and implement transit

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Implementing the Plan

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

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

Characteristics of a highly competitive project:

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

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

APPENDIX

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

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

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

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

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