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 237 members, including 16 counties, 169 cities, 21 independent school districts, and 31 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 over 6.5 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 15-member Executive Board. The Executive Board is supported by policy development, technical advisory, and study committees, as well as a professional staff of 306.

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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North Texas Tollway Authority
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Access North Texas is the public transit-human services coordination plan for North Central Texas and includes prioritized public transportation strategies for each of the region’s sixteen counties. It addresses the transportation needs of older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals and others with transportation challenges. This plan is required by both federal and state legislation and it will inform funding decisions for federal and state transit programs that focus on transit-dependent populations. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) designated the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCT-COG) as the lead agency to prepare this plan and Access North Texas supports state goals to increase efficiencies in public transportation service.

The plan was developed locally and collaboratively through the participation of transportation providers, transit customers, advocates, local government representatives and health and human service agencies. Demographic and travel data analysis served as a starting point to identify public transportation needs, gaps in service and resources available to address those shortcomings. Public and stakeholder meetings, often supplemented with surveys and phone calls, brought to life important issues for every county and shaped the strategies for enhanced or expanded transit services outlined in Access North Texas.

Some transportation needs and gaps in service were common across the diversity of the region’s transportation providers and residents. Conversations highlighted the need to improve transit services at the local level through strong partnerships among transit supporters and providers, to increase awareness of existing transit services and to leverage resources that support additional transit services. For many customers with transportation challenges, improving the ride and wait times of current services can improve the feasibility and likelihood of using transit for everyday trips.

The need for improved transit services at the regional level was also shared. Customers and advocates need more access and streamlined access to regional destinations and need simplified, reliable connections among the region’s wide variety of transit services. In particular, transportation services that address access to regional employment clusters from outlying areas and other enhancements that would facilitate access to jobs and job training were often identified.

The plan also supports the continuation of existing transit services for transit-dependent populations and implementation of regional coordination projects already underway such as the taxi voucher program for individuals with disabilities. There was support for centralized information about transit options in order to make using those services more straightforward for transit riders. Coordinated regional travel training that provides customers the tools to successfully navigate transit services was defined as a way to meet transportation needs in the region.

Many who participated in the planning process wanted to continue the discussion and assessment of public transportation through coordinating committees, planning studies and ongoing communication among stakeholders, the public and transportation providers. Through-
out the region, customers and transportation providers agreed that influential champions for public transportation who will promote and support public transit are needed.

Partnerships among local governments, social and human service organizations and transportation providers are the first step to implement many approaches outlined in Access North Texas. Over the next four years, Access North Texas supports and will serve as a framework for improvements to transportation services for those most in need as they travel in their communities and the region.
Access North Texas is a plan to better coordinate the delivery of transportation services and increase efficiencies in public transportation, community transportation and human service transportation. It is focused on better serving older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals and other groups with transportation challenges as they travel in the 16-county North Central Texas region. The plan summarizes a significant amount of information and while it cannot address every public transportation need in North Central Texas, it provides a firm foundation to enhance and improve public transportation. As an update to the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan completed in 2006, Access North Texas assesses transportation needs, documents available resources, identifies strategies that address those needs and prioritizes implementation activities over the next four years.

Throughout the region, transportation links people to employment, community services, life-saving medical care and life-enriching activities. For many, transportation is a simple task between life’s activities. For those without transportation options, everyday activities are not easily accessible and are sometimes impossible. This plan was created to meet federal and state requirements for coordinated planning to eliminate waste and generate efficiencies that will enable increased levels of transportation service for those who need it most. Federal, state and local agencies invest significant funding in transit across the region and this plan informs funding recommendations for service.

Strategies for public transportation service included in Access North Texas can make a difference in people’s lives. Available and accessible transportation can support access to jobs and education, life-saving medical services and other life sustaining activities. A 2008 study from Dr. J. Joseph Cronin, Jr. at Florida State University explored the return on Florida’s investment in transportation services for transportation disadvantaged populations such as older adults, individuals with disabilities and low-income individuals. The study found that investment in transportation for these populations yielded both direct and indirect benefits for the state. When individuals are able to use transit to access preventive medical care, other subsidized costs for assisted living or hospital stays can be avoided. In the Florida case, if one percent of transit trips result in the avoidance of a hospital stay, the payback to the state is $11.08 for each dollar of investment in transit. Funding for transportation that enables an individual to work, even part time at minimum wage, returns $5.71 for each dollar of transit service investment based on reduced welfare costs. Beyond that basic return, the wages earned by that worker are returned to the state through sales tax and other revenues as the worker spends money in the community. The study documents similar returns on investment for transportation to educational and job training programs ($5.85 per dollar invested in transit) and for life-sustaining trips ($4.62 per dollar invested) that enable individuals to live independently, including trips to pay bills and to shop for clothing, medications, personal services and other essen-

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1 See Appendix A: Plan Requirements.
effect. This plan outlines strategies that will enhance and coordinate commuter transportation as well as public transportation to life-sustaining and life-enriching activities. When implemented, these strategies will eliminate waste, generate efficiencies and continue progress toward reducing air pollution in the region.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) served as the lead agency for this regional public transportation coordination plan. Within the 16-county area outlined below, NCTCOG is responsible for planning in a variety of forms, which includes transportation planning. The agency also coordinates transit service and conducts short and long term planning for service.

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16-County North Central Texas Region

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The plan is not based on a top-down approach and does not dictate requirements for service and activities. Since Access North Texas kicked off in January 2012, thousands of individuals were contacted to participate and share their perspectives and thousands participated in surveys, public outreach meetings, stakeholder meetings, emails and phone calls. These conversations, along with data collection and analysis, have led to the prioritized strategies included in this plan, for the region and each county.

Throughout the region, Access North Texas evolved through a process that began with identifying transportation needs, gaps in service and resources available in each county. A wide variety of data was collected and analyzed to identify those factors and provide a foundation for the plan. The table below outlines some of the key data collected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic data</th>
<th>Population and population density</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Older adult population</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young population</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Population of individuals with disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low-income population</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Zero car households</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minority population</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited English proficiency population</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Veteran population</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transit trip generator data</td>
<td>Major employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social service locations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education and job training locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Major retail or commercial concentrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation resources data</td>
<td>Transportation providers and services</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regional corridors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Unique transportation resources</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notable commuter patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Existing planning efforts that identify transit needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To integrate data analysis with real-world circumstances and to select prioritized strategies for each county, NCTCOG staff interacted with individuals from cities and counties across the region in a variety of ways, reaching out to thousands of the region’s residents. Over sixty meetings were held, bringing together hundreds of stakeholders with a variety of perspectives including workforce, aging, disability, housing, local government, public transportation and veterans. Outreach events gathered
over 600 attendees who shared their perspectives on transportation needs. Surveys solicited additional input; over 3,000 individuals returned surveys from throughout the region. Participants identified and prioritized strategies that address transportation needs and gaps in service in the region.

Each chapter of this plan highlights prioritized strategies and additional strategies that may be pursued if resources are available over the next few years. Priorities include a wide range of strategies such as new or improved services as well as communication and awareness initiatives. Locally-developed plans that address public transportation are also referenced in Access North Texas because these locally-developed plans may include public transportation strategies consistent with Access North Texas. Each chapter of this plan outlines how partners and stakeholders will pursue and monitor implementation of strategies developed through Access North Texas or outlined in locally-developed plans. Extensive supporting documentation for outreach and data analysis conducted during Access North Texas is included in an appendix for each geographic area. Supporting documentation will be housed online at www.accessnorthtexas.org and will serve as a reference for ongoing discussions and future planning and implementation.

With the completion of this Access North Texas planning document, implementation work is already underway. Partners throughout the region are beginning to implement strategies in the plan and through regional and local support over the next four years, a wide variety of agencies and individuals will continue to build partnerships, to collaborate and to discuss transportation challenges that are always evolving.
Chapter Three
Access North Texas In the Region

The Plan Process
For Access North Texas, each of the 16 counties in the region is unique and the planning process and outcomes for each are described more fully in the following chapters. The general process of data collection and analysis, stakeholder and public outreach and strategy prioritization was tailored to each county based on staff support available, the level of involvement of local partners and concurrent planning efforts taking place during Access North Texas. The strategies outlined in this chapter for the region as a whole were synthesized from the region-wide results of stakeholder input and data analysis.

Public Transportation Needs, Gaps in Service and Resources
In addition to data collection and outreach conducted as part of Access North Texas, North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff developed a tool that incorporates the primary focus populations of this plan (older adults, individuals with disabilities and low-income individuals) into one measure to highlight potential transit needs across the region.

Transit Access Improvement Tool
The Transit Access Improvement Tool (TAIT) was developed 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. It does not include a population density variable because it is used to identify areas with a higher proportion but not necessarily number of individuals that may need transit service. As such, it was not created to specify the level of transit service that would be appropriate for an area and it does not designate where service should go. As one aspect of data analysis in Access North Texas, combined with public input and additional data, the TAIT informed the discussion of priorities for public transportation. This chapter provides a regional level summary of the TAIT and more information can be found in Appendix B5.

The TAIT designates a score for each U.S. Census block group in the region based on four variables: percent of population that is low-income, has a disability, is over 65 and has zero cars.\(^1\) Scores for each variable are assigned to block groups in the region based on a comparison to the Regional Average (RA). The population of low-income individuals, people with disabilities, and people over 65 were scored using the same scoring designation (Table 1). If a variable was less than or equal to the RA it was assigned a score of 1, greater than the RA and less than or equal to 1.33 times the RA had a score of 2, greater than 1.33 times RA and less than or

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\(^1\) Data used for the TAIT was available from the 2010 5-Year American Community Survey (ACS) and is based on the 16-county regional averages. All demographic data were from the ACS estimates except the percent disabled, which was available from the 2000 Census. Persons who are low-income are persons whose household income is at or below the Department of Health and Human Service poverty guidelines. Age 65 and over is anyone over the age of 65. Persons with disabilities includes any civilian, non-institutionalized individual over 5 years old with at least one disability. Zero car households are households that do not own a car.
equal to 1.66 times the RA had a score of 3. Any variable that was greater than 1.66 times the RA and less than or equal to 2.00 times the RA had a score of 4 and anything greater than 2.00 times the RA was designated a score of 5. The three scores for percent low-income, percent disabled, and percent over 65 are multiplied to obtain a TAIT score of 1 to 125.

Next, each block group was assigned a score ranging from 0-15 depending on the percent zero car households as compared to the RA (Table 2). Areas where zero car households were less than or equal to the RA were assigned a score of 0, greater than the RA and less than or equal to 1.33 times the RA had a score of 6, greater than 1.33 times RA and less than or equal to 1.66 times the RA had a score of 9. Percent zero car households greater than 1.66 times the RA and less than or equal to 2.00 times the RA had a score of 12 and anything greater than 2.00 times the RA was designated a score of 15. The zero car household scores were added to the number obtained from multiplying percent below poverty, percent disabled and percent over 65, giving the TAIT a scoring range of 1 to 140.

Region-wide, the largest clusters of high potential need for public transportation are located in Tarrant County and Dallas County. In Tarrant County, the greatest need appears clustered

Table 1. TAIT Scoring Designation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Percent Below Poverty Line, Disabled or Over 65</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>≤ Regional Average (RA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>&gt; RA and ≤ 1.33 X RA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&gt; 1.33 X RA and ≤ 1.66 X RA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&gt; 1.66 X RA and ≤ 2.00 X RA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>&gt; 2.00 X RA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. TAIT Scoring Designation: Zero Car

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Percent Zero Car Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>≤ Regional Average (RA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>&gt; RA and ≤ 1.33 X RA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>&gt; 1.33 X RA and ≤ 1.66 X RA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>&gt; 1.66 X RA and ≤ 2.00 X RA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>&gt; 2.00 X RA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in south Fort Worth with moderate needs also indicated in the rest of Fort Worth and Arlington. Dallas County’s greatest need are located in the southern portion of the city of Dallas, and extending toward the northern portion of Ellis County. TAIT scores in the counties surrounding Tarrant County and Dallas County had primarily low to moderate scores. Many of the cities located in these counties had clusters of populations with high potential need for public transportation, but some rural and unincorpo-
rated areas in the farther reaches of the region exhibited high potential need for transportation service. For example, in Navarro, Hood, and Palo Pinto Counties, almost every block group included high proportions of the population in the key indicator populations of low-income individuals, persons over 65, individuals with disabilities and zero car households.

Strategies for Coordinated Public Transportation

Public involvement, stakeholder discussions and surveys supplemented data analysis from the TAIT described above and additional data collection outlined in subsequent chapters. Together, these activities across the 16-county North Central Texas region revealed recurring themes that transcend local and county boundaries. Strategies to address regional level needs are outlined below.

Prioritized Strategies

Strategy 1
Continue implementation of regional transportation service and coordination projects
- Implement a regional taxi voucher program to increase the affordability of shared-ride transportation across the region for individuals with transportation challenges
- Improve access to information and transportation services for veterans to address needs for access to community and Veterans Affairs services
- Implement regional vehicle-for-hire standards to facilitate access to private transportation providers in the region

Strategy 2
Coordinate and plan for seamless regional connectivity between service providers including transit authorities, other public transportation agencies and human service or community transportation providers

Strategy 3
Meet existing funding commitments for services for transportation-dependent populations

Strategy 4
Establish and support coordinated regional travel training that contributes to customer knowledge of, awareness of and meaningful access to public transportation options across the region

Strategy 5
Create and maintain a centralized information resource for transportation resources in the region

Additional Strategies
- Improve access to jobs from outlying areas to large employment centers in the region and provide evening and weekend services or extended service hours to facilitate access to jobs and job training
- Expand access to regional transit facilities and services by linking various transportation services and improving the ride and wait times on transit services to increase the feasibility and acceptability of transit for everyday trips
- Recruit influential champions for public transportation who will promote and support public transit through leadership or policy initiatives and who will advocate for increased investment in public transit
- Establish and communicate the cost of service to potential partners and identify creative ways to secure additional local matching dollars to access federal transit funding
- Increase the variety of vehicles in transportation provider fleets to better match vehicles to the service being provided, including adding smaller, more fuel-efficient, wheelchair accessible vehicles as well as potentially seeking a waiver from 100% wheelchair-accessible vehicles while maintaining services required by the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Improve the quality and quantity of information provided by transportation agencies and establish coordination with 2-1-1 services in the region

Additional strategies that address needs identified in the planning process will be considered
between this plan and a future plan update.

**Monitoring Implementation**

Following plan completion, the next step is to coordinate funding and partnerships to successfully implement projects. Transportation providers, stakeholder agencies, communities and counties across the region will work to implement the strategies outlined for each county in Access North Texas and strong partnerships will be needed to facilitate the region-wide strategies outlined in this chapter. Any willing and interested parties are welcome to join the discussion and be part of the ongoing planning and implementation process. The plan recommends the formation of coordinating committees that meet on an ongoing basis for many of the region’s counties. These committees will continue to assess public transportation needs, will help guide implementation of the strategies outlined in Access North Texas and will assess progress in implementing the plan over the next four years.
The Plan Process
In Kaufman County, prioritized strategies for addressing transportation needs and gaps in service were developed through an in-depth transportation needs assessment and planning study. This included an assessment of demographic and employment data and a travel pattern analysis. It also described existing transit services in the county, focusing on the services of the main transportation provider, STAR Transit. The project included a public meeting and a survey to gather additional information on the needs and concerns of residents. This information was supplemented with stakeholder interviews. Government officials and staff, social service agency staff and transportation providers were contacted to discuss public transportation needs over the next few years.

A public outreach meeting was held in Kaufman County to gather experiences and information on public transportation from residents and transit riders. The meeting was held in March of 2013 in Terrell. Over 170 mailed invitations and additional notice in online message boards, community calendars and local news reports drew approximately 30 people to the meeting. During the public meeting a brief overview of the planning process was followed by questions and comments from attendees who shared their perspectives on transit needs and opportunities.

The survey developed for Kaufman County was intended to gain a more thorough understanding of the existing needs and challenges facing residents and stakeholders. Two versions of the survey sought feedback from county residents. One survey was hosted online and was focused on the general public. This survey was publicized through news outlets and online message boards. The other was distributed to local transit riders and to many individuals affiliated with human service agencies in the county. Both surveys were available in English and in Spanish. The survey results enabled additional perspective on the data gathered through meetings, interviews and demographic analysis.

Together, demographic and travel analysis, public outreach, stakeholder interviews and survey responses led to the strategies for Kaufman County outlined in this chapter.

Public Transportation Opportunities, Gaps in Service and Resources
This section summarizes needs and resources identified in the county.

Demographic Highlights
Demographic data in Kaufman County was used to identify populations that may have high potential need for public transportation. As of 2010, Kaufman County’s senior population represents 10.3% of the county’s total population. Larger concentrations of seniors are found in the more rural northeast and southern parts of the county. Older adults in rural areas may need dependable public transportation to avoid isolation and resulting poor quality of life. Another notable demographic is that 29% of the population of Kaufman County is below the age of 18. Younger individuals who cannot drive must rely on others, including public transportation, to travel in their communities. Between 2000 and 2010, some areas of Kaufman County experienced tremendous growth, especially the city of Forney, which grew by 162% over that decade. With rapid population growth, public transportation services must adjust to keep pace with changing needs and demands.
Notable clusters of employment in Kaufman County include areas in both western and eastern Kaufman, in the southeastern section of Terrell and in Forney. Through 2020, job growth in Kaufman County is expected to occur throughout the county, but block groups in the eastern section of the county and between Terrell and Forney are forecasted to grow significantly. Current public transportation options to employment within the county are generally quite limited.

Additional demographic detail is available in the Kaufman County existing conditions report available online at www.accesskaufman.org.

Transit Access Improvement Tool
The Transit Access Improvement Tool (TAIT) was developed to identify locations with certain demographic factors that may indicate a greater need for public transportation. The populations of individuals with disabilities, individuals over 65 and low-income individuals were combined with the population of zero car households in this measure. Low scores in the TAIT range indicate locations where the target populations identified above are generally at or below the regional average. Increasing TAIT scores indicate that the population of one or more of the target populations is progressively above the regional average. The TAIT does not include a population density variable because it is used to identify areas with a higher proportion but not necessarily number of individuals that may need transit service. This tool is an aid to considering public transportation needs and cannot be considered the deciding factor in decisions regarding public transportation. A more detailed report on the TAIT can be found in Appendix B5.

Kaufman County’s moderate TAIT scores are located in the central portion and eastern half of the county.
of the county. Many areas on the western half have low TAIT scores. One notable area of the county with a high TAIT score was the southern section of Terrell. This area had populations of low-income individuals, older adults and zero car households all greater than two times the regional average. One area of southeastern Kaufman County in Mabank had a high TAIT score, with an over 65 population that was greater than two times the regional average and populations of low-income individuals and individuals with disabilities nearly two times the regional average.

Resources

The primary public transportation provider is STAR Transit, which offers demand response service available to the general public throughout Kaufman County. Demand response service is available on weekdays, generally from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. STAR Transit also operates a trolley service in the city of Kaufman as well as Medicaid transportation. Vanpool service for commuters traveling to regional employment destinations is available through Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) and other regional transportation authorities, and fourteen vanpools were operating from Kaufman County in 2012.

Relevant Plans and Projects

Relevant plans were reviewed to assess how this plan could be coordinated and integrated with community efforts. The city of Forney’s most recent comprehensive plan was completed in 2008 and has sections that focus on transportation. The plan recognizes the relationship between transportation and land use and proposes several mobility goals to guide development in the city, with one goal to promote alternative mobility choices. Another transportation related goal in the city’s comprehensive plan recommends coordination with Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) to explore the possibility of extending transit service or bus service to downtown Forney. The city of Terrell’s most recent comprehensive plan was written in 2002 and has a goal to optimize mobility and decrease dependency on automobiles by encouraging multi-modal alternatives. These alternatives could potentially include trolley or bus options where feasible.

Commuter Summary

A travel analysis identified significant commute and other travel patterns of Kaufman County residents. Based on the analysis, around 43% of work trips generated in Kaufman County remained within the county, 7% of work trips traveled to Mesquite, 6% traveled to northeast Dallas, and 5% traveled to Dallas’ Central Business District. In the city of Kaufman, 35% of work trips are completed within the city, with other work destinations that include Terrell (10%), Kemp (6%), and Mesquite (4%). Close to 40% of Terrell’s work trips are absorbed internally and other work destinations include surrounding communities in Kaufman County (10%), as well as Mesquite (6%), the northern half of the city of Dallas including the Central Business District (17%), and Hunt County (5%). The variety of commute destinations for Kaufman County workers indicate that providing public transportation to meet the diverse needs of commuters would require a combination of services for local trips, inter-community commutes and regional commutes.

Stakeholder Interviews

The primary issues identified most often by stakeholders included a need for regional connections into Dallas and concern about the lack of awareness of public transit services in Kaufman County. They also noted that there are limited transportation options for seniors, low-income residents and people with disabilities and that relying on private automobile transportation for trips to work can be particularly costly for low-income workers. Stakeholders noted that planning is done primarily for automobiles and expressed concern that the STAR Transit Trolley in Kaufman has low ridership.

Some stakeholders acknowledged that additional funding for transit is likely to be limited and therefore alternatives to traditional transit need to be found. Several stakeholders noted that there is a need at the county level to begin planning and having transportation conversations about long term transportation needs.
Public Outreach Meeting
Comments and discussion during the outreach meeting identified the need for local transit services, particularly for groups with potentially limited mobility such as seniors, people with disabilities and low-income individuals. While local transportation was an important issue during the outreach meeting, attendees also noted the need for regional transportation. Attendees discussed that many have medical appointments in Mesquite and Dallas, but the lack of affordable and convenient transportation makes access a challenge. Attendees expressed the importance of linking cities within Kaufman County and providing connections from Terrell and Forney to DART’s services. Participants also noted that veterans of the county need better access to Veterans Affairs services in Dallas.

Survey Findings
Findings from the surveys provided additional information on the needs and challenges of public transportation in Kaufman County. The data demonstrates that a majority of survey respondents drive themselves to destinations, and of those that have used public transportation, STAR Transit’s services (Kaufman Trolley and demand response services) and DART rail services were most commonly used. Those that use transit services note concerns about limited access to Terrell and Dallas and limited access to medical and shopping facilities.

On the whole, transit, as a proposed service in the community, is valued even if individuals are not likely users. Many respondents noted that some level of service should be made available especially for the most vulnerable members of the community such as older adults or individuals with disabilities. Factors that would encourage the use of public transportation among those with transportation challenges include transit service at a bus stop near their house and destination, better daytime transit availability, increased gas prices and more bus stop amenities. The general public would be encouraged to use public transportation if gas prices rise and if traffic congestion worsens. Survey respondents highlighted a mix of potential new public transportation services that appeal to them. Overall, shuttle/express service to DART and bus service between cities and communities in Kaufman County were appealing. For those with transportation challenges, countywide dial-a-ride services were most appealing.

Strategies for Coordinated Public Transportation
Using demographic and travel analysis and a review of existing services combined with public and stakeholder outreach, strategies that could address gaps in service were developed.

Prioritized Strategies
Strategy 1
Improve public awareness of existing and new public transportation services
Strategy 2
Increase usage or modify service to address low ridership on STAR Transit’s Trolley in Kaufman
Strategy 3
Improve access to local employment destinations in areas such as Kaufman, Terrell and Forney, focusing on options for low-income workers
Strategy 4
Increase options for local transportation within and between communities in Kaufman County for those with limited mobility, including older adults, individuals with disabilities and low-income individuals
Strategy 5
Explore opportunities for regional connections that can address needs for commuter services connecting to major employment destinations in the region and needs for affordable and accessible transportation to medical services in the region, including Mesquite and Dallas

Additional Strategies
- Maintain and improve transportation options for older adults throughout the county, including rural northeast and southern parts of the county
- Improve the availability and affordability of transportation to Veterans Affairs services in Dallas
Additional strategies that address needs identified in the planning process will be considered between this plan and a future plan update.

Fourteen transportation service alternatives that provide methods to implement these strategies are outlined below. Some alternatives are appropriate for all of Kaufman County’s community types. Others are only feasible under certain conditions that may not be present in every community type or at the countywide level. The alternatives are listed below and additional descriptive information for each alternative is included in Appendix C-Kaufman, including the type of need it addresses, the potential market and typical service parameters.

• Volunteer Driver Program
• Mobility Management/Coordination
• Cost Sharing Opportunities
• Promoting Public Awareness of Transportation Options
• Carpool
• Vanpool
• ADA Paratransit/Eligibility-Based Dial-A-Ride
• General Public Dial-A-Ride
• Community Shuttle
• Express Bus/Park & Ride Service
• Limited Bus Stop Service
• Point Deviation Service
• Route Deviation Service
• Local Fixed-Route Bus Service

All of the different types of transportation services above could be feasible in Kaufman County in the near term. To target the appropriate services to the communities where they are likely to have the greatest impact or be most effective, these services were evaluated. The evaluation was based, in part, on relationships between community types and transit service design. For transit to be most effective, individual services must be designed to match market demand and operating environments. Three geographic groupings/designations were identified for evaluating alternatives appropriate for implementation in Kaufman County. The geographic groupings are as follows:

**Countywide** This classification applies to the entirety of Kaufman County and includes all communities and unincorporated areas.

**Rural Communities** This group includes Kaufman County communities with populations under 6,000. (Combine, Cottonwood, Crandall, Grays Prairie, Kemp, Mabank, Oak Grove, Oak Ridge, Post Oak Bend City, Rosser, Scurry and Talty)

**Small Cities** This group includes Kaufman County cities with populations over 6,000. (Forney, Kaufman and Terrell)

The table on the following page shows the compatibility of each service alternative with regard to the three classifications above. A white circle indicates that the service alternative is least compatible/appropriate with a classification; a black circle shows it is most compatible/appropriate. A circle that is both black and white means that a service alternative may not be ideal for a type of community (or at the countywide level), but could be successful under certain circumstances.

**Monitoring Implementation**

Following the completion of the transit needs assessment and planning study for Kaufman County, transportation providers and local stakeholders will collaborate to determine next steps and to potentially implement selected strategies.

**Further Information**

Appendix C-Kaufman provides summary information about the menu of transit alternatives. The transit needs assessment and planning study also included funding estimates and general implementation plans for selected strategies, which are beyond the scope of this Access North Texas plan. More detail and final reports from the study will be available online at www.accesskaufman.org.
## Transit Service Alternatives Compatibility for Kaufman County

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Alternative</th>
<th>Rural Communities</th>
<th>Small Cities</th>
<th>Countywide</th>
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- ⬜ Least compatible/appropriate
- ⬜ Could be successful under certain circumstances
- ● Most compatible/appropriate