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← To Dallas - Union Station  
→ To Fort W.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

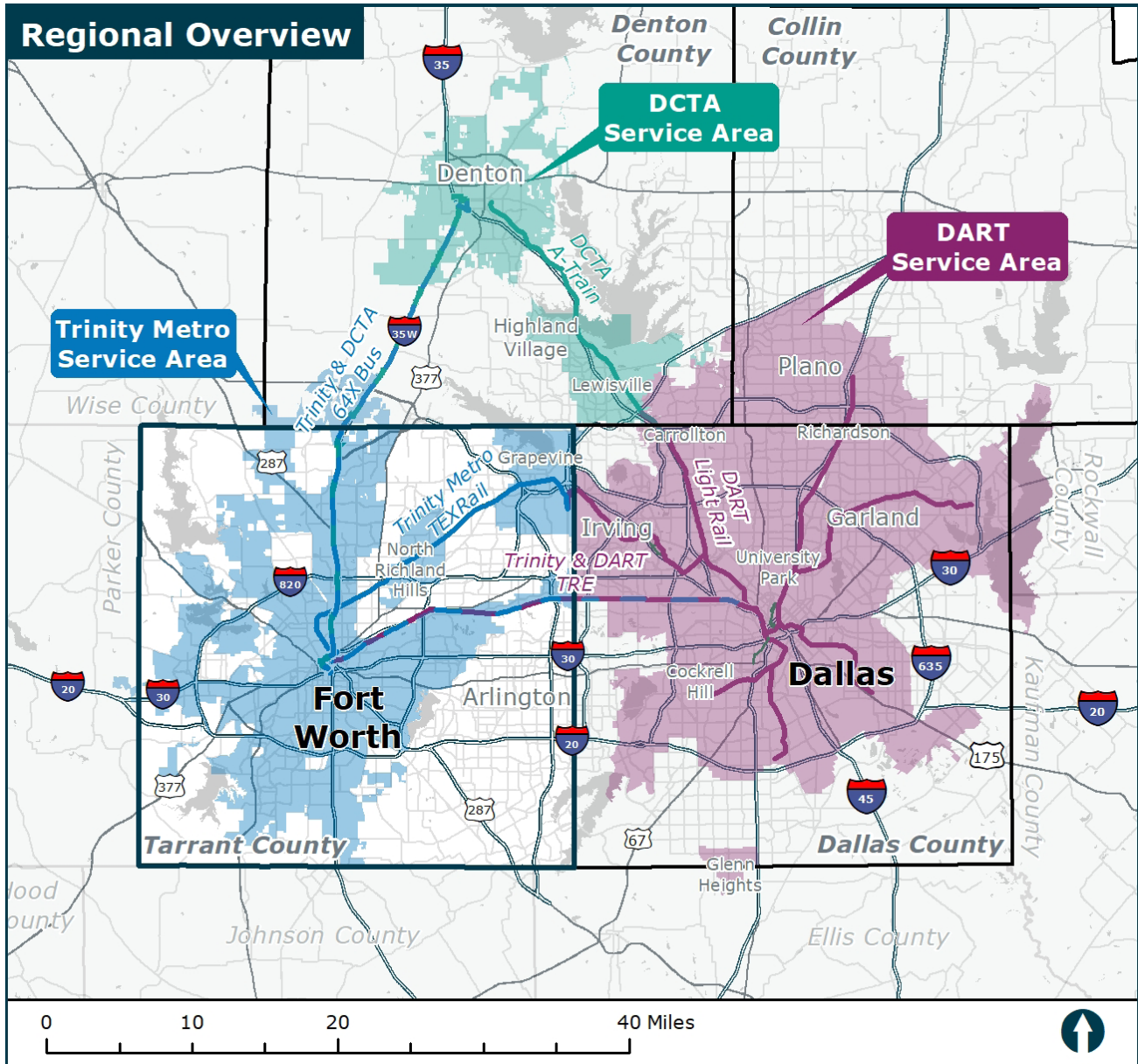
# 1

### **RICHLAND HILLS, TX\***

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

The study area focuses primarily on the regions of Tarrant County not currently served by fixed route or general purpose demand-response. Tarrant County is primarily served by Trinity Metro fixed route service, with interregional service supplied in conjunction with Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) and the Denton County Transit Authority (DCTA); the City of Arlington additionally provides access to demand-responsive service through a public-private partnership.

\* Photo courtesy of Adam Moss—<https://www.flickr.com/photos/roadgeek/32697084120>, CC BY-SA 2.0—<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>



## 1.1 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The engagement team assembled a Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) and a Technical Advisory group (TAG) to be consulted on both regular and ad-hoc bases. The SAG and TAG were made up of a mix of community leaders and technical experts from across the county.

The engagement team also conducted two general public involvement (PI) meetings to solicit feedback and commentary from the general public. These meetings were conducted over tele-conference, with recordings and records made public on the project website. The engagement team also conducted an online survey.

## ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

- **The study was conducted during the 2020–2021 COVID-19 pandemic.** While the pandemic did not affect all aspects of the study, it had a significant impact on the types of public engagement that could be conducted safely.
- **Online engagement during the pandemic was an effective method** of reaching the general public during a time when group meetings were limited. Neighborhood and civic groups organized attendance by their members. However, the need remains to aggressively target individuals that may not be represented by these groups.
- Stakeholders—in this case, staff and elected officials from municipalities—were **able to represent the specific needs of their residents** during the advisory group meetings. Most confirmed the needs and opportunities in the shared mobility space, and sought to balance growth with the needs of their existing populations.
- **Stakeholders preferred a balanced approach** to local and regional travel; recognized the need for new funding sources; and looked to leverage the existing partnerships and agencies already present in Tarrant County.



## ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

### 2020



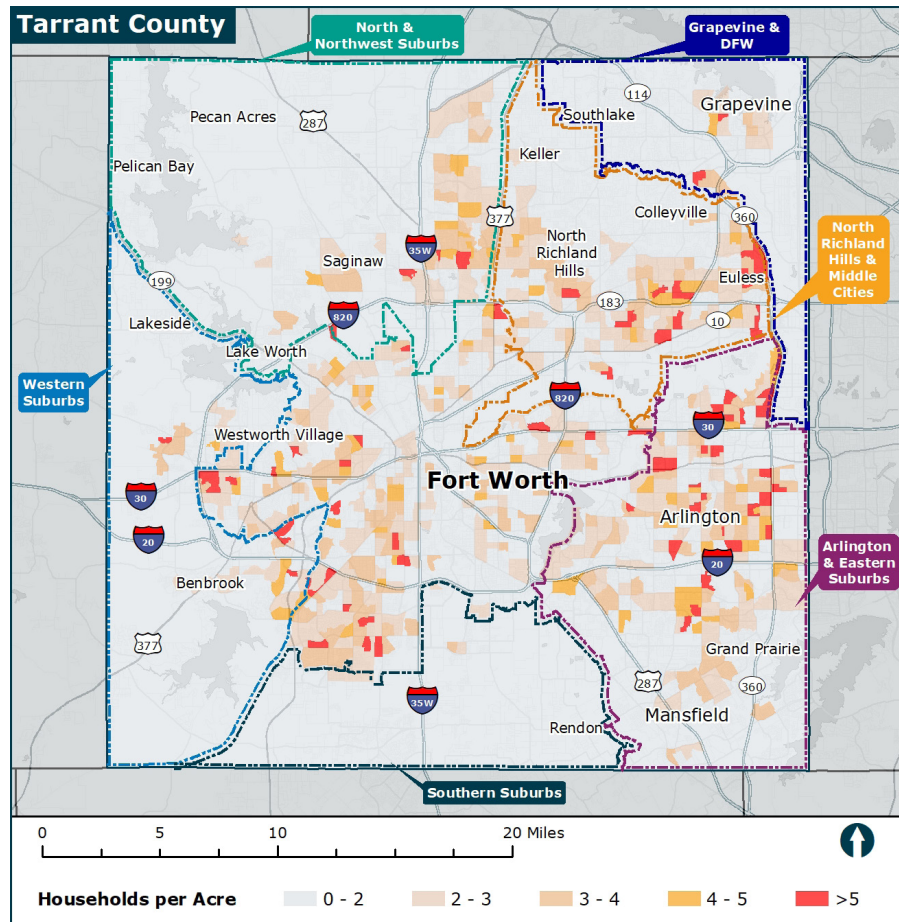


## 1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Tarrant County has a variety of locales, from rural to urban; its travel patterns and infrastructure reflect this, with services from paratransit to commuter rail.

The region’s transportation needs have been the subject of several studies, including Access North Texas, Transit Moves Fort Worth, and Mobility 2045 Long-Range Plan.

The Tarrant County Transit Study examines demographic trends, travel patterns, transit service, and planning efforts across the county and region. Six subregions were identified to assess these patterns in more detail.



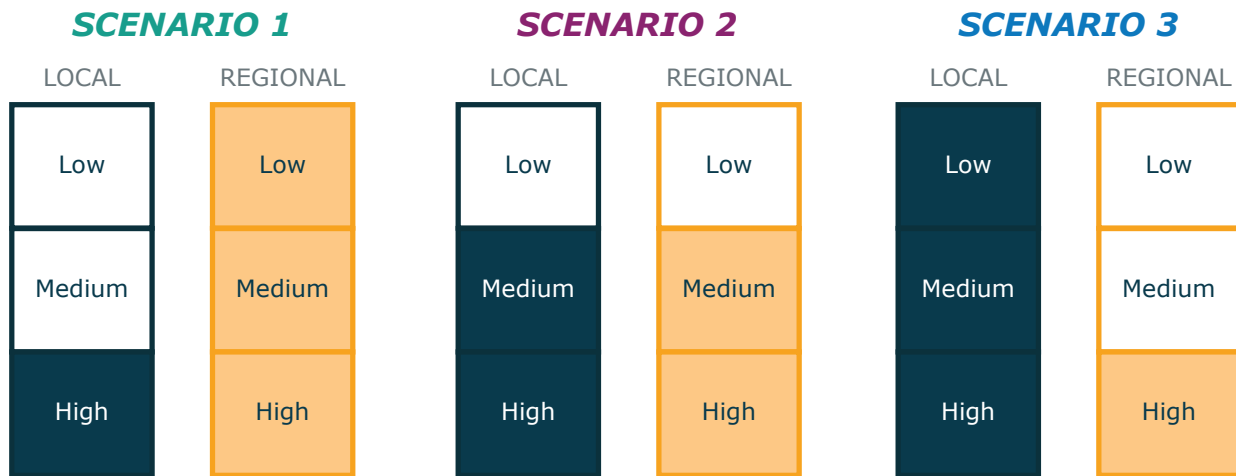
### EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

- **Most of Tarrant County’s recent growth** has occurred in areas that are not served by existing transit services. This trend is expected to continue.
- **Most travel activity is local**, with 80 percent of trips originating or terminating in central Fort Worth, North Richland Hills (or cities nearby), or Arlington. Three-quarters of trips remain within those three areas of Tarrant County and, of those, 86 percent remain within a single analysis area.
- In addition to fixed route service, **there are many existing on-demand transit services** (ZipZones and Arlington Via), paratransit (ACCESS and Handitran), and demand-response services (such as those operated by the Catholic Charities of Fort Worth Transportation Services). On-demand transit services show potential for providing first-mile/last-mile connectivity with existing and future regional transit hubs.
- **There is a gap in current and future transit service outside of central Fort Worth.** It is unlikely fixed route service could be operated in areas with lower population density, but a mix of fixed route and demand-responsive services could meet the needs of growing communities.

## 1.3 SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

Countywide scenarios were developed based on a per-capita annual operations and maintenance budget similar to current funding levels in Trinity Metro’s service area and Arlington’s current funding levels of their Via on-demand service.

Areas were identified as having High, Medium, or Low service needs for both local and regional travel. Service needs were identified based on population density and concentration of equity groups (defined in this study as having low median income and/or high racial and ethnic minority population).



Three scenarios were developed: **Scenario 1**, prioritizing regional travel (in a relative sense—the majority of service still reflects the primacy of local trips identified in the existing conditions report); **Scenario 2**, addressing both local and regional travel patterns; and **Scenario 3**, prioritizing local travel.

### SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY

S1	SERVICE TYPE	ANNUAL HOURS	PERCENT OF HOURS	ANNUAL COST	PERCENT OF COST
	Local	245,000	88%	\$13.5 million	74%
	Regional	34,300	12%	\$4.6 million	26%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>279,300</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$18.1 million</b>	<b>100%</b>

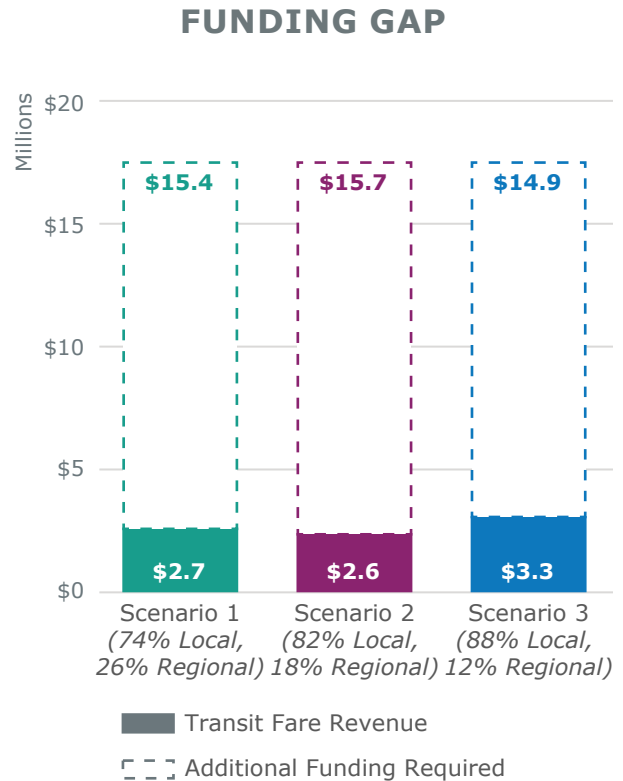
S2	SERVICE TYPE	ANNUAL HOURS	PERCENT OF HOURS	ANNUAL COST	PERCENT OF COST
	Local	271,000	92%	\$15.1 million	82%
	Regional	24,100	8%	\$3.3 million	18%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>295,200</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$18.4 million</b>	<b>100%</b>

S3	SERVICE TYPE	ANNUAL HOURS	PERCENT OF HOURS	ANNUAL COST	PERCENT OF COST
	Local	276,100	94%	\$16.1 million	88%
	Regional	16,200	6%	\$2.2 million	12%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>292,300</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$18.3 million</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 1.4 FUNDING AND FINANCE

Five municipal typologies were identified to contextualize analysis among peer communities: rural, outer, and central communities, based on proximity to existing services; self-sufficient communities who currently provide their own services; and future extension communities, identified in Mobility 2045 as areas for expanded high-capacity transit infrastructure.

Revenue sources including sales tax, general funding options, and value capture were evaluated for their potential to meet funding needs. At the county level, between \$14 and \$16 million in annual operating costs (net of fare revenue) would be needed to provide the services described in the Scenario Development report.



### FUNDING AND FINANCE SUMMARY

- **A variety of funding measures are needed** to meet the needs of Tarrant County’s municipalities. An additional sales tax increment of 0.5 percent comes close to fully funding the operations need for some communities, but in other locations, this option is either politically infeasible or insufficient to meet revenue needs. Alternative funding solutions—or lower-cost services—must make up the difference.
- While services—be they on-demand or fixed route—must be flexible and responsive to meet service demands, **they depend on predictable and consistent revenues** to ensure the continued viability of the mobility program.
- Funding mechanisms based on property value will have **substantial increases over time**, as transit-oriented development occurs within service areas. PIDs and Assessments will continually bring revenue to the table and be a stable income stream.
- **The use of sales tax can become a reliable source** if there is a common practice among communities to use these funds for transit supportive services. Transit fares seem to have a greater impact when fixed route, local service is more readily available.

## 1.5 IMPLEMENTATION

The Implementation Plan provides a framework for Tarrant County municipalities to establish or expand transit service based on the typologies identified in the Scenario Development task. The Implementation Plan is designed as a **flexible, menu-based toolkit** to meet each municipality's needs, priorities, and goals.

**PROVIDER OPERATING AGREEMENT**

**PARTNERSHIP**

**PROCUREMENT WITH CONTRACTED OPERATOR**

**DIRECT OPERATION**

The framework consists of:

- » Service Profile elements that define transit service structure, governance, funding, operations, and administration.
- » Four Service Models that demonstrate how a municipality can establish and run transit service, with a discussion of the benefits and risks of each Model.
- » A series of decision-making questions for municipalities to evaluate Service Profiles and Service Models as part of the transit planning process.
- » A recommended nine-step implementation process, with references to supporting partners and discussions of current practices within the transit sector for each step.
  - Local and regional partners can provide market assessment, community engagement, and funding and financing support.
  - State, Federal, and private partners can provide technical assistance, institutional support, funding, and administrative capacity.

### IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

- Aside from Direct Operation, all Service Models require contracting. **Data sharing agreements with the contractor(s) are critical to determining program success.** Areas of negotiation involve level of aggregation, timeliness of data, personally identifiable information, and trade secrets.
- Selecting a Service Profile and Model should be based on the unique travel demands, community needs, land use, geography, available funding, and administrative capacity within each municipality. **The municipality must optimize service and meet program goals under policy constraints and available resources.**
- **FTA regulations related to Title VI and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) must be met throughout planning, design, procurement, and operations.** Municipalities should reference tools, practices, and standards used by transit agencies and the City of Arlington for guidance.

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