

Introduction

The purpose of Access North Texas is to document the public transportation needs for seniors (older adults), individuals with disabilities, individuals with limited financial resources, and other transit-dependent populations. These populations can have difficulty finding public transportation options that connect them to medical appointments, work opportunities, job training, education, food access, and other essential destinations. This plan identifies where these transportation connections could be improved within Dallas County. This chapter provides an overview of outreach efforts, demographics, existing transportation services, findings, and prioritized strategies. More information about the plan and regional findings can be found in the Executive Summary.

Outreach

Public outreach for Dallas County was conducted through a survey and stakeholder outreach meeting. Outreach efforts were advertised through email communication, the Access North Texas website, a Local Motion publication, and social media. Opportunity to share transit-related comments and concerns anonymously by location in a virtual public mapping tool called Map Your Experience was also available through the Access North Texas website.

North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Transportation staff conducted 13 meetings across the region, which included an in-person stakeholder outreach meeting in Dallas County at South Irving Library in the city of Irving on March 27, 2025. Emails were sent to over 220 recipients in the Dallas County email subscriber list. The meeting was also promoted on the Access North Texas website. Seven individuals and three NCTCOG staff attended.

The transportation survey was available to residents and stakeholders online, on paper, and available in English and Spanish. The online survey could also be translated into other languages by selecting the preferred language option from a drop-down box on the live survey page. The survey for the public collected input on public transportation in the region. A similar survey was also available online for organizations and agencies that work with transit-dependent populations. For the public survey, there were approximately 166 participants for Dallas County submitted online and four additional paper and/or pdf surveys submitted to staff. For the agency survey, participants from six agencies indicated

they operate in or serve Dallas County. Finally, 61 transit-related comments were received for Dallas County through Map Your Experience.

All feedback from outreach efforts were cleaned, compiled, and coded for analysis, in addition to the survey feedback. Using the coding key, qualitative feedback was quantified to create visual representations of feedback for identified barriers, missed trips, desired modes, and enhancements. See Appendix D for the visualizations. Additional feedback was factored into the Dallas County analysis as applicable, such as in situations where comments relate to multiple counties or for transit providers operating across county boundaries.

Demographics Assessment

Dallas County continues to experience a growing population. According to the 2024 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, the population exceeds 2.62 million in comparison to 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates of 2.60 million. This shows an over 0.5 percent increase in population. Dallas County's population, according to the region's long-range transportation plan Mobility 2050, is expected to reach more than 3.0 million by 2050.

When comparing the 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates to the 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates, the older adult population increased by 13.3 percent, individuals with a disability population increased by 16.0 percent, and the low-income individuals in the county decreased by 12.8 percent. Areas with higher concentrations of these populations should be a particular priority in efforts to promote existing or new transit services. Detailed estimates and percentages for these key populations, as well as other demographics, are shown in the table below and in the appendix.

Metric	Dallas County Population	Dallas County	Regional
Total Households	982,737	-	-
Zero-Car Households	66,428	6.8%	4.8%
65 and over	309,055	11.8%	12.3%
With a Disability	284,076	10.9%	10.5%
Low-Income Individuals	479,486	18.5%	14.1%
Total Veterans	81,776	4.2%	5.5%
Youth (under 18)	658,541	25.1%	25.0%
Total LEP Individuals	440,340	18.0%	11.9%

Table 1: Target Population and County Metrics. Data from 2024 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Transportation Services Assessment

Dallas County is serviced by several transit providers with Dallas Area Rapid Transit being the main transit authority with additional cities and providers connecting riders along the perimeter of the county. The map and descriptions below provide a brief overview of these programs, including the extent of their service areas and the types of transportation options they provide. The most updated service area boundaries, fares, and hours of operation can be found on the providers' website.

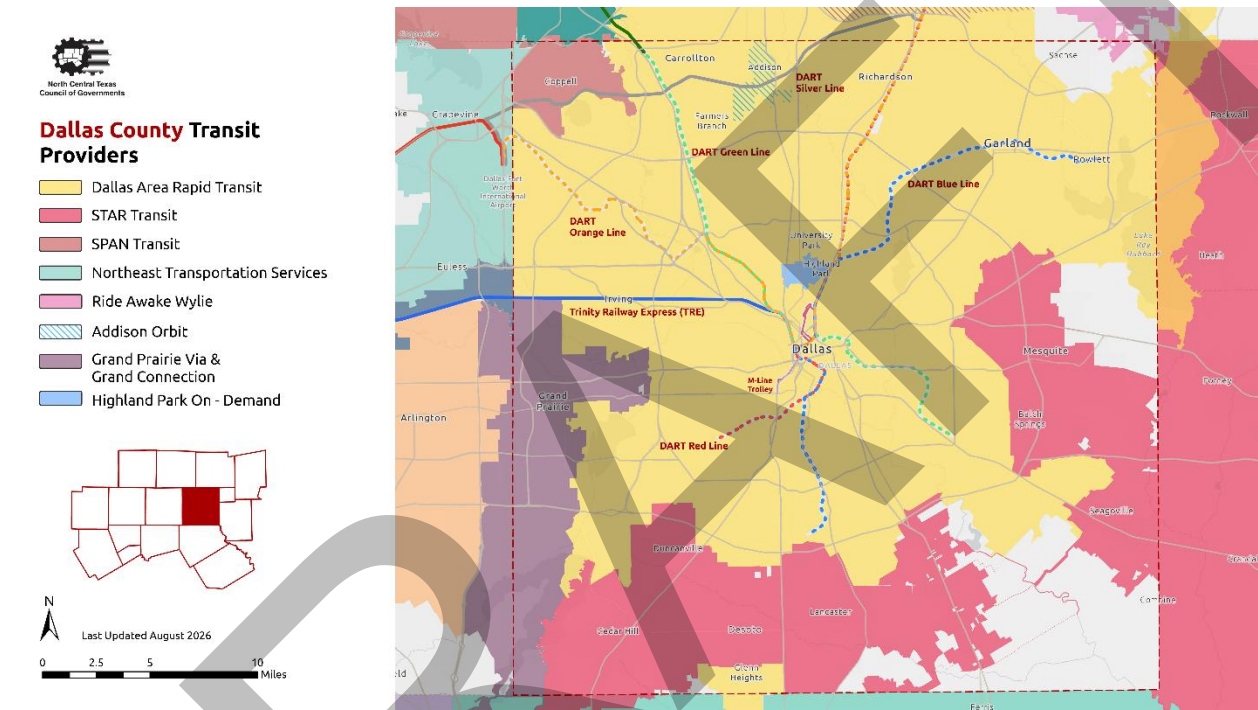


Figure 1: County Transit Service Map

Dallas Area Rapid Transit

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) operates bus, rail, GoLink microtransit, and paratransit programs in member cities including Addison, Carrollton, Cockrell Hill, Dallas, Farmers Branch, Garland, Glenn Heights, Irving, Plano, Richardson, Rowlett, and University Park. Highland Park, a former member city, withdrew from membership and ended service in May 2026. DART offers multiple transportation services and programs which include different fares and ticket types, including local and regional options. To purchase tickets, riders can use the DART GoPass App, GoPass Tap Card, and Ticket Vending Machines (TVM) located at the platforms. Also, DART operates the Dallas Streetcar for the city of Dallas and supports the M-Line in Uptown which is operated by the McKinney Avenue Transit Authority (MATA).

STAR Transit

STAR Transit offers multiple services, including an express bus route, same-day trip service, demand-response trip service, and connections to DART. STAR Transit operates in multiple cities, including Mesquite, Balch Springs, Seagoville, DeSoto, Cedar Hill, Duncanville, Hutchins, Lancaster, and Wilmer. Riders may call customer service to book rides, use the STARNow app, or use the GoPass app (excluding demand-response trips) to purchase tickets. Multiple fares are available depending on the specific service and eligibility.

Span, Inc.

Span, Inc. (also known as Span or Span Transit) offers shared non-emergency medical transportation services in the city of Coppell for seniors 60 years of age or older and for people who may have mobility impairments. The service area includes the city of Coppell boundaries and surrounding areas, including a connection to the Baylor Scott and White Medical Center of Grapevine. The services are offered by appointment and must be scheduled in advance. To utilize the service, prospective riders must apply and be approved. Upon approval, riders will be issued a ParaPass card where money can be pre-loaded and used to pay trip fares.

Ride Awake Wylie

The city of Wylie offers a subsidized on-demand rideshare program through a public-private partnership. The program also includes a separate service for riders with disabilities. Rides are for anyone with origin and destination locations within the city of Wylie boundaries and a few locations outside of city boundaries. A minor portion of Wylie is in Dallas County where people can get connected.

Via Grand Prairie & Grand Connection

Via Grand Prairie offers an on-demand, shared transportation service within the city of Grand Prairie boundaries, including a few destinations outside the city. The program offers multiple fare options depending on eligibility. To purchase tickets and schedule rides, the rider will need to create an account using the Via Grand Prairie app or by calling the customer service line. Additionally, the service connects to the West Irving TRE Station which enables connectivity to the regional transit system.

Riders who are 60 years of age and up, or have a physical or mental disability, may be eligible to use the city's Grand Connection demand-response paratransit service that offers door-to-door transportation within the city at no cost. Prior to using the service, prospective riders must apply to determine eligibility. After being approved, riders may schedule trips by contacting a dispatch line.

Vanpool Program

In addition to the other transportation options and services, Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) and Trinity Metro operate a Vanpool Program in the North Central Texas region. Through Trinity Metro, as of April 2026, 74 vanpools originate in Dallas County, 146 vanpools have destinations in Dallas County, and 67 vanpools have an origin and destination within the county. Through DCTA, as of April 2026, 0 vanpools originate in Dallas County, 106 vanpools have destinations in Dallas County, and 2 vanpools have an origin and destination within the county. The number of vanpools may change month to month as the regional program expands shared commuter transportation opportunities.

In addition to the transit providers above, various DART-member cities implemented new services in the past year. This was a response to changes in services and discussions among cities and the transit authority. While still new, services are linking residents within their respective city and connecting riders to DART's light rail system.

Addison Orbit

Addison Orbit, launched in April 2026, is a new service offering transportation throughout the town of Addison. The program offers multiple fares and ticket types, including a monthly pass. To use the service, prospective riders need to create an account through the Addison Orbit app or book a ride by calling the customer service line. Additionally, the service connects to transit hubs such as DART's Silver Line Addison Station and Knoll Trail Station which enables connectivity to the regional transit system.

Irving Connector

Irving Connector, launched in June 2026, is an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible van service that replaces the discontinued DART bus routes 225 and 255 in Irving. The service, as of July 2026, expanded to include The Loop at Las Colinas. There is a flat fare for the Irving Connector service, however, the Irving Connector Loop service at Las Colinas is free. Riders can use the Via Citymapper mobile application to view real-time schedules and purchase tickets. Reservations are not required to use the service.

Highland Park On-Demand & Highland Park Access

Highland Park On-Demand, launched in May 2026, is a new service offering on-demand rides at no cost for riders within city boundaries. To purchase tickets and schedule rides, the rider needs to create an account using the Highland Park On-Demand app or by calling a customer service line. Highland Park Access is a paratransit service, including a base fare. Prior to using the service, prospective riders must apply to determine eligibility. Both programs offer connections to the DART Mockingbird Station which enables connectivity to the regional transit system.

Overall, gaps in service still exist in Dallas County due to a variety of factors. Survey and outreach responses show some insight into what gaps may exist and where further assessment is needed. Through continued collaboration amongst stakeholders, the gaps in service can be identified, reviewed, and discussed.

Needs/Gaps Assessment (Data Analysis)

In Dallas County, survey respondents helped to identify a variety of transportation barriers, potential enhancements, missed trips, and desired modes. The combination of all outreach efforts, including surveys and meetings, revealed that residents are interested in the topic of public transportation and would like to see greater access and availability of service. This section analyzes survey and outreach findings while incorporating inputs through the Map Your Experience tool and the Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool map to identify priority need areas. A more comprehensive and detailed view of notes, input, feedback, and reports can be found in Appendix D.

Outreach Meeting

As one of the meetings with larger attendance, the outreach event in Dallas County provided an opportunity for various viewpoints and experiences to be shared. In addition to discussion, participants were asked to share their transit enhancement priority preferences in an activity, which are summarized in Table 3.

From the outreach meeting, interest was expressed in direct connectivity to the county courthouse as many individuals may rely on transit to get there. Additionally, there was interest in better understanding policies related to trespassing warrants on public transportation and appropriate processes for banned riders to be reinstated. These comments may indicate a need for a user-friendly process for the public to request adding or moving transit stops/routes and evaluating ease of access of transit provider information pertaining to rider policies and processes.

Interest was also expressed in learning how agencies can help address the anxiety of people with disabilities, not knowing whether transit will work for them and having the ability to navigate transit on their own. One opportunity shared included a Mobility Ambassadors or similar program that focuses on individual support, training, and assistance. Reaching out to transit providers with these, or similar programs can provide opportunities for individualized training, clarification of what resources are available, and building confidence when navigating how to use transit. Providers other than DART that operate in the county may offer demand-response, on-demand, and other specialized programs that are more targeted for transit-dependent populations. This discussion and feedback may indicate a need for providers, small and large, to enhance visibility of agency staff or teams who provide travel training opportunities to prospective riders to increase ease of access.

Top Desired Enhancements			
Service Time Expansion	Demand-Response	Transit Education & Awareness	Pedestrian Improvements

Table 2: Summary of Services, improvements, and/or activities identified as a priority at the Dallas County outreach meeting in Activity 3.

Public Survey

Of the total regionwide survey participants who identified a county of residence, approximately 23 percent were from Dallas County, including both online and non-online survey participants. While most public survey respondents indicated they are not missing trips, there are others who are. Most were for social/entertainment/event trips, medical trips, and work trips. Of those that identified barriers that prevent them from getting where they need to go, the top three included:

- Public transportation services don't meet their needs
- No car available
- Nobody to drive them

With about 68 percent of the 154 survey respondents to the question of "Does public transportation meet your needs?" indicating that public transportation does not meet their

needs, the top reason behind this, reflected in the figure below, is that services are not available at locations they are needing to travel.

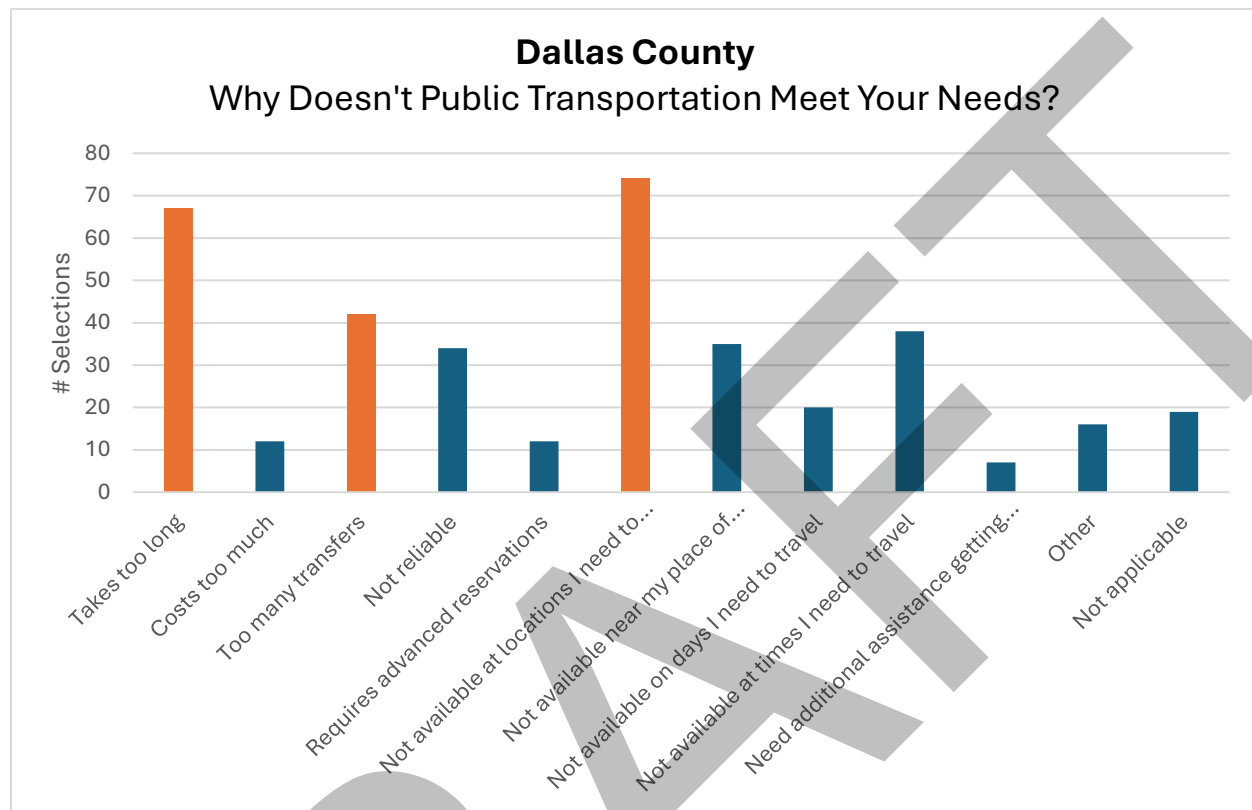


Figure 2: Visual of public survey question responses. Orange highlighted bars indicate most popular selections.

When looking at the best way to enhance the transit experience, the online responses below were the preferred enhancement options selected.

- Expanded service area (average ranking of 2.65 by 84 participants)
- More frequent buses or trains (average ranking of 2.77 by 71 participants)
- Increased security (average ranking of 3.90 by 77 participants)

Of the 129 online respondents for this specific question, about 65 percent selected Expanded Service Area, making this the most preferred option by a sizeable margin. Of the four additional surveys submitted to staff, the most preferred enhancement was increased security.

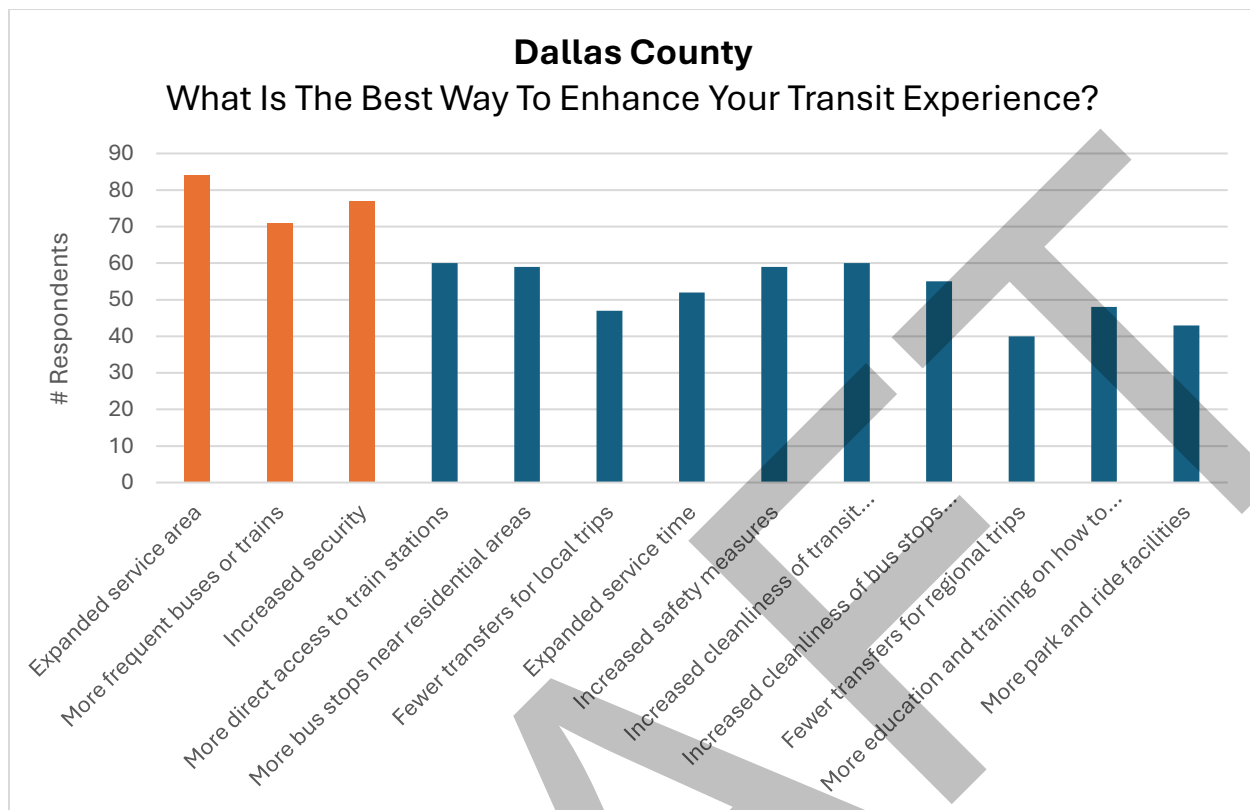


Figure 2: Visual of public survey question asking participants to rank options in order of preference. Orange highlighted bars indicate top three preferred enhancements from online participants.

Agency Survey

Approximately 37 percent of agencies who participated in the survey indicated they serve or operate in Dallas County and that their agency serves multiple populations, including older adults, individuals with disabilities, individuals with limited financial resources and others. Agencies who provided feedback include the city of Grand Prairie, DART, MATA, SPAN Inc., and STAR Transit.

The table below identifies top responses provided by the agency representatives and/or staff who participated in the agency survey. More information on survey responses can be found in appendix D.

What are the most requested trips among those you serve?
• Work
What keeps your customers from getting where they need to go?
• No car available to them • Nobody to drive them
For public transportation options that don't meet your customers' needs, what is the reason?
• Not available at locations needed to travel • Not available near places of residence

What is the best way to enhance your customer's public transportation experience?
Expanded service area

Table 3: Summary of select public agency survey question responses. Not all responses apply to the individual county, however, the overall service area the agencies operate, Dallas County is included.

Categorized Qualitative Feedback

Meeting notes, comments in the survey questions, and additional feedback from providers offered insight into experienced barriers, missed trips, desired modes, and enhancements in Dallas County. The table below summarizes the top qualitative feedback and comments that may be compared to other findings. Participation and feedback varied among the different outreach methods.

Barriers	Missed Trips	Desired Modes	Enhancements
Lack of access and/or availability of service	Medical	Rail service	Access and availability of service
Safety concerns	Work, School, Food, Religious	Bus service	More transit-oriented infrastructure
Transit facility and/or operational issues		Non-motorized options	Service area

Table 4: Summary of categorized qualitative feedback. More detailed information can be found in the Appendix D.

Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool

While the Demographics Assessment earlier in the chapter shows the number of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and other transit dependent populations in Dallas County, these figures describe the county as a whole and don't show where these populations are concentrated. The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) fills this gap by mapping seniors, individuals with disabilities, and individuals below poverty at the Census block group level to identify where transit-dependent populations may be located and where transit need may be greatest.

In Dallas County, there are several Census block groups where populations of individuals age 65 and older, below poverty level, and persons with disabilities are above the regional percentages. For the TAIT map, illustrated in Figure 4, the most concentrated areas where all variables are above the regional percentage are mostly in areas south and southeast of the city of Dallas, while also scattered throughout the county. North, northeast, and northwest of the city of Dallas include more distributed areas that have at least one variable above the regional percentage (ex. city of Garland and city of Coppell) and less instances where all variables are above the regional percentage.

For populations 65 and over, as illustrated in Appendix C, the high and moderately high concentration areas are scattered across different areas in the county. Between

Carrollton, Richardson, Garland, Mesquite, and University Park, there is greater distribution of areas ranging from low concentrations to high concentrations. South of Dallas to the Cedar Hill area also exhibits a variety of ranges. Moving southeast toward Seagoville and west toward Irving, there is more area with lower concentrations of older adult populations. For people with a disability population, as illustrated in Appendix C, the highest concentration is in southern Dallas and north of IH 20. There are areas of high concentration east and west of the city of Dallas (near Mesquite and Grand Prairie). Farther north, there is a distribution of concentration ranges. North of Dallas, there are fewer higher concentrated areas (near University Park and city of Garland). For individuals with limited financial resources, as illustrated in Appendix C, the highest concentration areas covering the greatest area is south of the city of Dallas along IH 45 and near the county border next to loop 9. Additional high concentration areas are scattered throughout the county, along with lower concentrated areas. There is less concentration of individuals with limited financial resources north of the city of Dallas in areas near University Park and Coppell.

Dallas County

Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

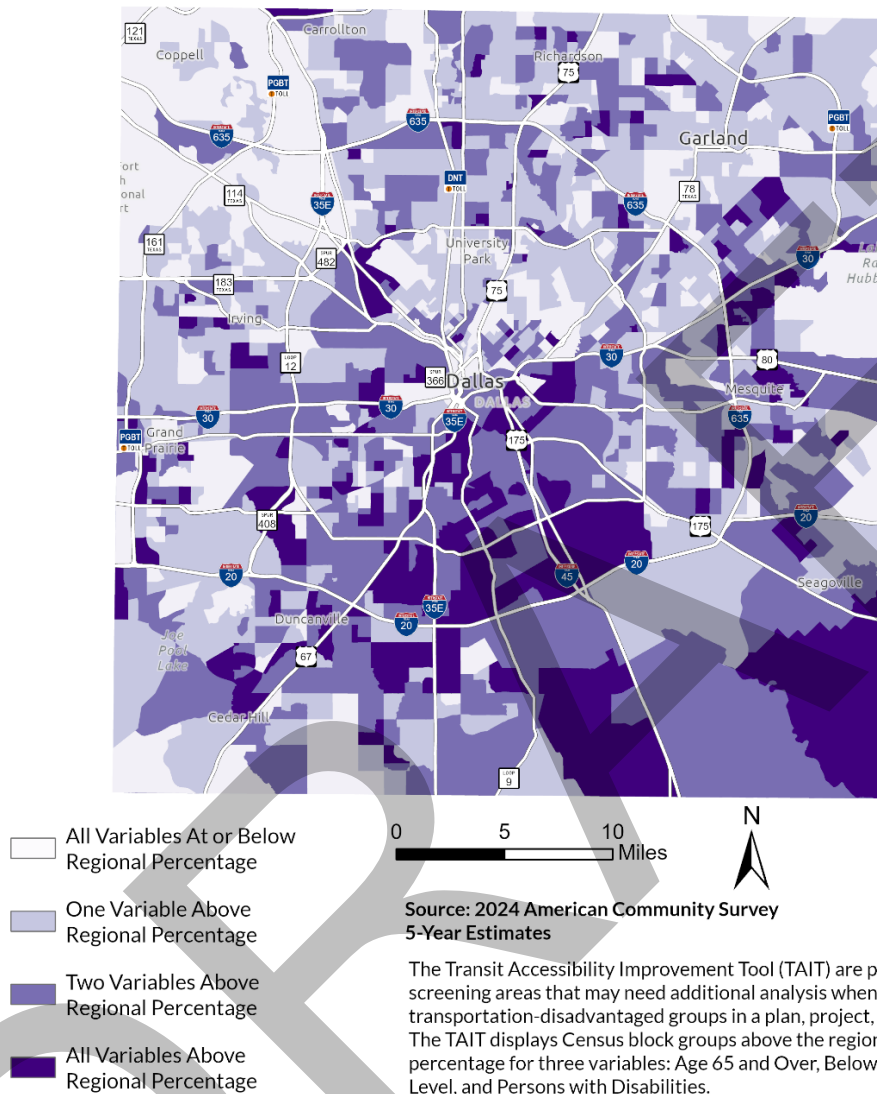


Figure 3: TAIT Map for Dallas County

Dallas County Zero-Car Households

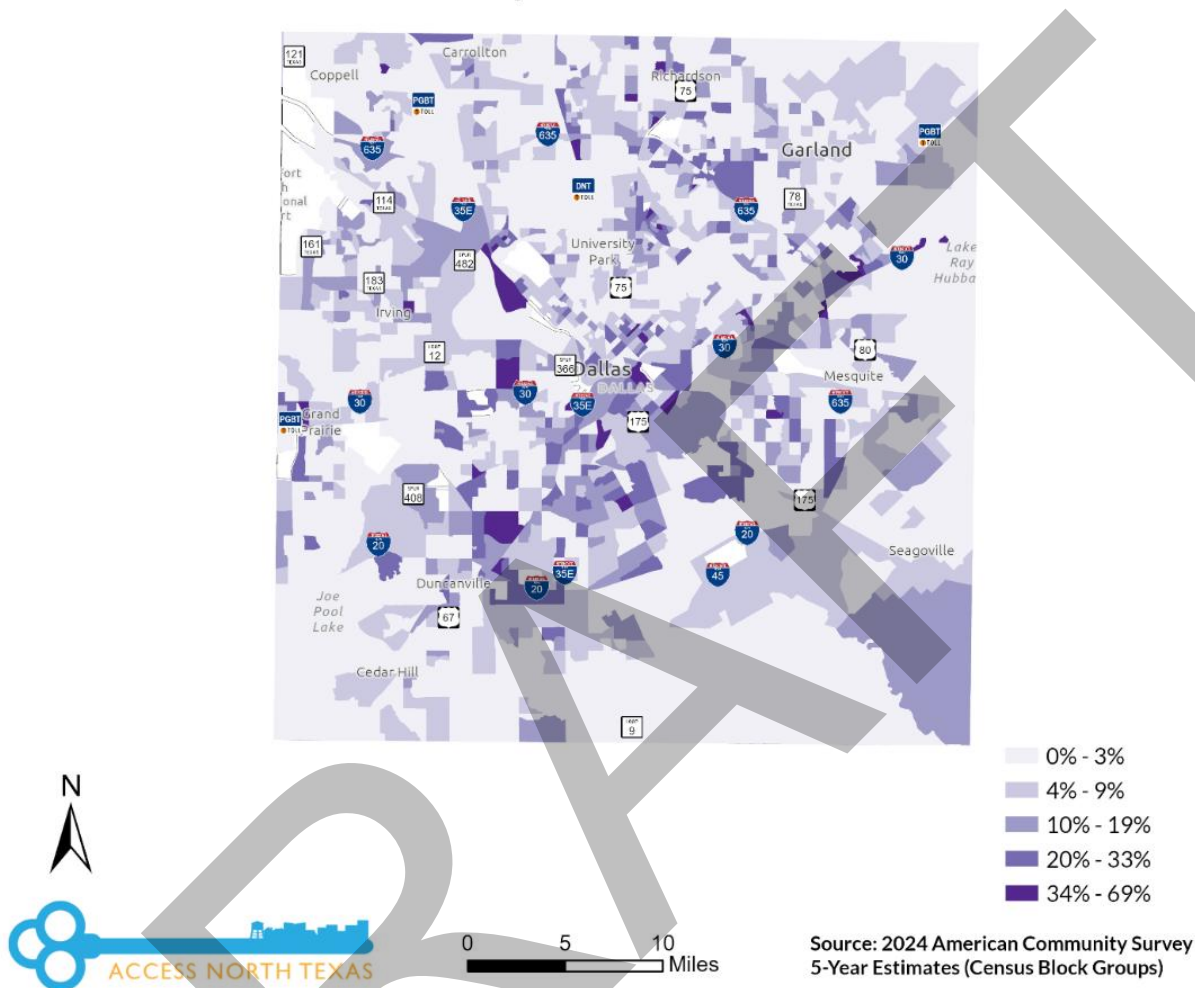


Figure 4: Individual Variable Map showing Zero-Car Households in Dallas County

For zero-car households, as illustrated in Figure 5, the highest concentration areas are near the central part of the city of Dallas, including some surrounding areas, and north of IH 20 south and southwest of the city. Other high concentrated areas are scattered throughout the county; for example, near the city of Grand Prairie and south of Garland along IH 30. Farther south, east, and west closer to the county border, there appears to be less zero-car household areas.

Goals/Strategies Development

The regional goals (five main categories identifying themes across the 16-county region) provide a framework for Access North Texas on a regional level, while the individual prioritized strategies applied to Dallas County are applicable to furthering those goals while also addressing needs within the county. These goals and strategies help provide direction for transit providers and stakeholders to plan and implement future projects and services that support transit-dependent populations.

The prioritized strategies were developed using information from multiple sources, including outreach, meetings, surveys, available data, and regional knowledge through stakeholder engagement and collaboration. Data and information were compiled and analyzed to help identify patterns and gaps. Prior to the finalization of the plan, the goals and strategies were provided to stakeholders for feedback and review.

Goals & Strategies – **MORE TO BE ADDED LATER**

Regional Goal	Dallas County – Specific Strategies
Plan and Develop Transportation Options by Assessing Community Needs and Challenges	1. Invest in programs to assist with filling gaps in public transportation. 2. Prioritize programs that facilitate transportation for work-related trips, medical, and healthcare appointments.
Implement Services by Enhancing Transportation Options and Expanding Where Service Gaps Exist	1. Expand public transportation services to key destinations throughout the region without comprehensive service and support regional integration of new services. 2. Implement service enhancements, including route frequency, service optimization, mode connectivity, and operating hours. 3. Provide accessible public transportation and supportive resources for older adults and individuals with disabilities, with a focus on improving connections between healthcare, housing, and transit services. 4. Support increased pedestrian connections to transit areas such as accessible sidewalks and bike access.

Regional Goal	Dallas County – Specific Strategies
Coordinate with Transportation Providers, Public Agencies, and Stakeholders to Increase Efficiencies	1. Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate, non-traditional ways to deliver and support public transportation, including, but not limited to, partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, transportation network companies, shared-use mobility programs, and volunteer drivers. 2. Work with public transportation providers and stakeholders to improve or maintain services connecting riders to the transit system, healthcare, and other key destinations. 3. Improve regional connectivity by increasing ease of travel across municipal and county boundaries, providing access to different transit modes, and enabling transfers to existing systems across various fare structures.
Drive Sustained Growth of Public Transportation Ridership	1. Integrate various funding sources to maximize efficiency and increase availability of affordable public transportation options. 2. Improve safety, security, and sanitation measures to build rider confidence and comfort.
Promote Access and Information about Available Transportation Options	1. Enhance communication and outreach programs to improve awareness of existing or new transportation options. 2. Conduct travel training to educate the public on available services and policies.