Access North Texas – Denton County
North Central Texas Council of Governments

Kelli Schlicher, AICP

Apr. 19, 2017
Lewisville Library

Apr. 26, 2017
Downtown Denton Transit Center
Agenda

Welcome and orientation

Introduction to Access North Texas

Identify needs and resources

Re-evaluate 2013 priorities

Questions, comments, discussion

Next steps
How to Use the Keypads

Press the number on the keypad that corresponds to the answer choice on the screen.

Press with the pad of your finger – not your fingernail.

A green light will illuminate briefly when the answer is received.

The answer will show briefly on the LCD screen.

Please do not push the channel button in the bottom left.
What type of agency do you work for?

1. Local or state government
2. Transportation provider
3. Healthcare provider
4. Non-profit
5. Social service organization
6. Community advocate / community member
7. Other
North Central Texas Council of Governments

Conducts planning and supports coordination for a variety of purposes

Transportation department coordinates service and creates short-term and long-term plans
Access North Texas

Is...

A plan to coordinate public transit and human services transportation

Identifying solutions to address unmet need

Specific, short-term plan

Prioritizing recommendations for limited federal and state funding

Focused on coordinating existing services
Access North Texas

Is not:

Unlimited funding

A transportation service

Detailed feasibility studies or highway planning

Top-down requirements for service or activities
Access North Texas

Timeline and Outcomes

Kick-off, August 2016
Denton County, Apr. 2017
Final Plan Document, Fall 2017
County-by-County Outreach Meetings, Fall 2016 – Summer 2017
Plan Implementation and Maintain Partnerships, Early 2018
Updating the Plan

Continue to identify successfully implemented strategies

Work with communities to identify transportation needs

Identify, update, and prioritize solutions

Implement projects through ongoing partnerships and coordination
Denton County

Goal: Clearly identify short-term transportation needs and resources to plan for efficiency and coordination

Successes and challenges to transportation

Destinations accessible and inaccessible

Barriers to accessing transportation

Benefits of transportation options

Kinds of service or accommodations needed
With the agency you work for, what is the highest day-to-day transportation need?

1. Medical
2. Work
3. Nutritional / Grocery store
4. Social
5. Other
What is your primary area of concern?

1. Improve awareness of available services
2. Increase coordination between agencies
3. Fund new services
4. Enhance the user’s experience
5. Create targeted implementation plans
6. Other
What funding approach will have the biggest impact on improving access to transit?

1. Focus on getting additional federal or state investment in transit
2. Focus on getting additional local government investment in transit
3. Focus on increasing user choice
4. Focus on integrating funding sources from multiple programs (Aging, Workforce, Medicaid, etc.)
5. Other

![Bar chart showing the distribution of responses]

- 1. 9%
- 2. 18%
- 3. 18%
- 4. 36%
- 5. 18%
What method could improve the awareness of available services?

1. Targeted marketing to local agencies
2. Public marketing campaign
3. A centralized location to receive information about transit
4. Materials provided in another language
5. Other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Targeted marketing to local agencies</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public marketing campaign</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A centralized location to receive information about transit</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials provided in another language</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is the biggest barrier for you when coordinating between agencies to improve public transportation?

1. Knowing where to start
2. Identifying appropriate contacts
3. Successfully contacting other agencies
4. Developing agreements between agencies
5. Other

[Bar chart showing percentages for each barrier: 36%, 27%, 9%, 9%, 18%]
What is the best way to enhance the user’s experience?

1. Personal instruction on the phone or in person
2. Better information about how to use transit
3. Additional assistance provided by the driver or personal attendant
4. Fewer transfers between providers for regional trips
5. Other
Which technology advances are most likely to help improve transportation options for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income individuals in the next five years?

1. Transportation network companies like Uber and Lyft
2. Web or smartphone apps with info on multiple providers
3. Assistive driving technology (stay-in-lane, automatic breaking)
4. Driverless cars
5. Driverless cars, buses or shuttles
6. Other
7. None – most people won’t access these options
Next Steps

Continue to identify successfully implemented strategies

Work with communities to identify transportation needs

Identify, update, and prioritize solutions

Implement projects through ongoing partnerships and coordination
## Your Feedback on Denton County Priorities

### Top Priorities

1. Conduct planning to quantify the transit needs of residents outside DCTA’s service area
2. Establish and maintain a county coordinating committee
3. Enhance connections among existing services to improve access within the county
4. Establish or improve service to regional destinations
5. Provide additional service in unserved areas and to underserved locations
6. Improve awareness of services

### Additional Priorities

- Create partnerships to increase the accessibility of bus stops and paths to transit
- Increase the availability and affordability of for-hire (private) transportation to increase options for travel
Please Return Your Keypad!

Thank you
Questions or Comments

Please contact:

Kelli Schlicher, AICP
Transportation Planner
(817) 695-9287
kschlicher@nctcog.org

Sarah Chadderdon, AICP
Principal Transportation Planner
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Please do not push the channel button in the bottom left.
What type of agency do you work for?

1. Local or state government 21%
2. Transportation provider 17%
3. Healthcare provider 0%
4. Non-profit 8%
5. Social service organization 8%
6. Community advocate / community member 13%
7. Other 33%

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Denton County

Goal: Clearly identify short-term transportation needs and resources to plan for efficiency and coordination

- Successes and challenges to transportation
- Destinations accessible and inaccessible
- Barriers to accessing transportation
- Benefits of transportation options
- Kinds of service or accommodations needed
With the agency you work for, what is the highest day-to-day transportation need?

1. Medical
2. Work
3. Nutritional / Grocery store
4. Social
5. Other

[Bar chart showing percentages:]
- Medical: 37%
- Work: 15%
- Nutritional / Grocery store: 0%
- Social: 7%
- Other: 41%
What is your primary area of concern?

1. Improve awareness of available services
2. Increase coordination between agencies
3. Fund new services
4. Enhance the user’s experience
5. Create targeted implementation plans
6. Other
What funding approach will have the biggest impact on improving access to transit?

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5. Other
What method could improve the awareness of available services?

1. Targeted marketing to local agencies
2. Public marketing campaign
3. A centralized location to receive information about transit
4. Materials provided in another language
5. Other
What is the biggest barrier for you when coordinating between agencies to improve public transportation?

1. Knowing where to start 32%
2. Identifying appropriate contacts 23%
3. Successfully contacting other agencies 13%
4. Developing agreements between agencies 19%
5. Other 13%

Access North Texas
What is the best way to enhance the user’s experience?

1. Personal instruction on the phone or in person
2. Better information about how to use transit
3. Additional assistance provided by the driver or personal attendant
4. Fewer transfers between providers for regional trips
5. Other

1. 22%
2. 48%
3. 7%
4. 7%
5. 15%

Access North Texas
Which technology advances are most likely to help improve transportation options for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income individuals in the next five years?

1. Transportation network companies like Uber and Lyft
2. Web or smartphone apps with info on multiple providers
3. Assistive driving technology (stay-in-lane, automatic breaking)
4. Driverless cars
5. Driverless cars, buses or shuttles
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www.accessnorthtexas.org
Access North Texas
Denton County Meetings

Wednesday, April 19, 2017
City of Lewisville Municipal Annex Building
Lewisville, Texas

Wednesday, April 26, 2017
DCTA’s Downtown Denton Transit Center
Denton, Texas

In April, two outreach meetings were held in Denton County. The comments and concerns from each meeting were combined into one summary in order to illustrate all of the transit needs within Denton County.

1. Meeting Summary……………………………………………………… p.1
   a. Welcome………………………………………………………… p.1
   b. Introduction to Access North Texas………………………… p.1
   c. Interactive Questions & Discussion……………………….… p.1
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   e. Next Steps................................................................. p.7

2. Attendee List………………………………………………………… p.7

1. Meeting Summary
   a. Welcome
      Kelli Schlicher from the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) welcomed and thanked everyone for attending each meeting.

   b. Introduction to Access North Texas
      Ms. Schlicher provided a short presentation and covered the following material at each meeting:
      - An overview of NCTCOG
      - What Access North Texas is and is not
      - The general timeline of the plan update
      - A summary of the 2013 plan

   c. Interactive Questions and Discussion
      The attendees answered several interactive questions and participated in open conversation about the public transportation needs and challenges in Denton County. The polling questions and discussion are summarized below.

With the agency you work for, what is the highest day-to-day transportation need?
Medical, other, and work trips were identified as the highest day-to-day transportation need. Top trip destinations for medical appointments include the Veterans Administration clinics in Dallas, Fort Worth, and Bonham. A veteran’s representative noted that connections to the Bonham clinic is particularly difficult and are typically accommodated by taxis. Residents of The Colony need access to doctors and specialists in Dallas.
County and Tarrant County. For one rider, the biggest issue is drivers disallowing service dogs on DCTA’s buses. Also, MHMR clients have been unable to board DCTA’s buses when trying to access services at MHMR. Denton Community Clinic can be difficult for clients to access (off of DCTA’s Route 1) due to the walking distance from the bus stop, particularly when clients are using crutches or a wheelchair. A representative from Denton Public Health noted that the cancellation of DCTA’s Route 3 would affect WIC clients’ access to services.

Other transit service needs included access to Alzheimer’s education and support, counseling sessions, education (including local ISDs, University of North Texas (UNT), and Texas Women’s University), and daily transportation needs beyond getting to the senior center. A couple of participants noted family crisis center and human trafficking victims need safe transportation to medical and counseling appointments. For UNT students, even with DCTA’s current high-frequency routes (up to 5 minute headways), there isn’t enough capacity to meet the demand. There are also funding issues keeping some cities from benefiting from transit service.

Students taking evening classes have trouble finding transportation for their return trip. It is difficult for Denton ISD (in Collin County, too) students to find transportation to evening literacy classes. Also, Denton ISD employees and secondary education students could benefit from transit. Currently, DCTA’s routes don’t run in the locations needed (around the 380 corridor) or during morning or evening commutes. Residents of Fairoaks Denton have trouble accessing services outside of Denton and DCTA’s service area.

Regarding public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals, etc., what is your primary area of concern?
Improving awareness of available services and increasing coordination between agencies were identified as the primary areas of concern. At Fairoaks Denton, while many of the residents are over the age of 65, they did not know about DCTA’s Access transit service for qualified older adults and individuals with disabilities. Additionally, an advocate mentioned that individuals requesting an application for Access services had to use a specific term (“Access application”). It can be difficult for a potential rider to know this specific term if they’re not familiar with DCTA’s services and are asking for a “disability application.” Another participant mentioned that it is difficult to get kids from McMath Middle School to local services (like a library) after school. Like the Access application, there’s a special term (“courtesy bus”) that was needed to get her son from school to a local library.

The United Way of Denton is working to increase knowledge of services available in rural areas of Denton County as well as identifying the potential collaboration opportunities to increase services provided in these areas. Part of increasing awareness includes providing information in different languages and through other outlets than social media. Areas outside of Lewisville need cities to buy in to provide transportation for individuals who do not drive. Presentations by transportation agencies to city councils could help increase awareness and develop relationships to increase city buy-in. Span staff mentioned that there should be a rider focus to help provide a seamless transition between transit providers for regional trips.
Additional information about how to access Span and DCTA’s services would be helpful. A Lewisville Chamber of Commerce representative noted that a business expo (“Discover Local”) is an opportunity to raise awareness about transit. Participants also indicated that an implementation plan focused on getting targeted groups of employees to work.

An attendee who works with victims noted her primary area of concern was a combination of all the options. Rural Denton County residents don’t have access to services in cities and there are city residents without safe access to existing services. If we can increase awareness, increase coordination and access a funding source, we can enhance the user’s experience with a higher sense of security. Denton County Friends of the Family’s main office is located between Corinth and Denton and they have trouble getting clients to services. As a result, they’re expanding their offices and services to help reach their clients with limited transit options.

Cooke County and Grayson County have limited transportation connections to Denton County and other urban counties. These connections are necessary for residents to access services and medical appointments. For example, a Child Protective Services (CPS) client living in Cooke County is required to take certain classes that are only in Denton County. If they can’t get to this out-of-county class, they’re unable to meet CPS’ requirements.

What funding approach will have the biggest impact on improving access to transit?
Integrating funding sources, getting additional local investment, and getting additional federal investment were seen as having the biggest impact on improving access to transit. A participant mentioned that integrating funding sources was similar to businesses interlining services. Transit agencies could “interline” their trips and balance the funds at the end of the month in order to improve the user’s experience. An attendee noted that there are agencies that coordinate and each receive federal funds. These federal funds could be used to offset the cost of the trip for the rider. This is a way to spend the existing funding better while improving coordination. A participant mentioned that there’s an education and investment opportunity for businesses to help improve local transit.

Increasing the user’s choice gives the rider multiple options that could meet their unique individual needs. Uber and Lyft are one way to address the first mile/last mile of a trip between a transit station and the rider’s end destination. Currently, DCTA has a pilot project with Uber in Highland Village to offer trips at a discounted fare. If the goal is to reduce the number of transfers between transit providers for regional trips. Adding Uber or Lyft to make first mile/last mile connections to stations could add another transfer for regional trips.

A participant expressed that some local governments are maxed out on their current contribution to transit. The Colony focuses on providing transportation for older adults to and from the senior center. Some senior center members who live in Carrollton now have trouble getting to the facility because the city no longer pays for these out-of-county trips. Currently, senior center volunteers are picking up these members and transporting them to the center.
An attendee noted that only so many highways and roads can be built. There needs to be a change in culture. Federal and State agencies are in the best position to lead that effort and determine how to move people in general rather than single occupancy vehicles.

**What method could improve the awareness of available services?**
Targeted marketing, a public marketing campaign, and a centralized location to receive information about transit were the best methods that could improve the awareness of available services. Many participants mentioned that all the strategies should be utilized. An attendee mentioned that a public marketing campaign may miss local agencies. So, targeted marketing (with market segmentation) would be the best approach. Additionally, a rider believed that targeted marketing would also be the best method because agencies already have an established, trusted relationship with their clients. Targeted marketing could also include giving presentations at city council meetings and senior centers, as well as leaving brochures at key locations.

An attendee thought expanding beyond targeted marketing with a public marketing campaign was the best method (i.e. innovation over traditional methods). While it's important to get the information out to the end user, it is equally important to communicate the importance of transit to the general public so that there is buy-in from families, employers, etc. and greater support for individuals using transit. A veterans' representative mentioned that public marketing would help inform veterans what options and benefits they have access to. The representative believe that face-to-face interaction at meetings and veteran benefits fairs could be the best methods to increase awareness.

A DCTA representative asked how they could better advertise route modifications and cancellations. The group suggested electronic constructions signs, MHMR billboards, and Our Daily Bread billboards. Also, a centralized location could be a cost-effective way to disseminate this information. This could be a website with a list of resources or a brick and mortar location for people to visit.

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) received funding through the Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative (VTCLI) and is developing a website called My Ride North Texas. This is a website that will help individuals identify their transit options based on their current location, destination, trip purpose and accessibility needs. Phase two of this project could include individuals booking trips through the website. A senior center representative mentioned that a link on their website to local transit resources would be very helpful. This would allow the senior center staff to share information (either online or in person) with their members.

2-1-1’s resource directory may not have current information. One participant assists her clients when calling 2-1-1 because the automated menu can be confusing and talking to a live person is preferred. The United Way of Denton has a community resource directory (available in print or online) of local resources, including transportation. The United Way representative encouraged agencies to share the resource with their clients.
What about coordination between agencies is the biggest barrier for you?
Knowing where to start and identifying appropriate contacts were noted as the biggest barriers to coordination. One attendee mentioned that, more than anything, time is the biggest barrier. Another participant echoed the concern with time, particularly when they're the only one on the project. Also, for individuals who aren’t native to the area, it is more difficult to identify the appropriate contact. Coordinating with all the appropriate agencies, ensuring consistency, and following-up in a timely manner can also be challenging. A county (or multi-county) coordinating committee could be a forum to discuss coordination between agencies. A participant noted that overcoming gaps in transit service may not be as simple as coordination. Federal rules and regulations were noted as a barrier to coordination.

Knowing where to start can be difficult for potential riders who may not know about Span or DCTA’s services or that they have mobility managers to help connect individuals to their services. Additionally, these potential riders each access information differently (not all have internet access), even in the rural areas. It is important for the mobility managers to be out in the community sharing their agency’s resources.

Agencies should coordinate to provide consistent trips to necessary services. For example, service could include a planned community shuttle from a residential community to a medical center. This type of agreement is less complicated between a transit agency and a city because they’re both political subdivisions of the state. When a transit agency works with another agency, federal charter rules come into play, ultimately limiting flexibility. Regardless of the parties involved, agreements take time to develop in order to craft proper transit solutions. Sometimes while agencies work to develop these agreements, they can get stuck on jurisdictional and contract issues, losing sight of the end goal (transportation for the customer). Lastly, when developing these agreements, there needs to be a balance of customer needs with necessary regulations. For example, picking a drop-off location that is most convenient for the customer even if it’s one street over in a neighboring jurisdiction.

A rider mentioned that there is difficulty scheduling within the 24-hour window with DCTA’s Access service. DCTA employees clarified that rides can be scheduled 7 days in advance up to 5 pm the day before the requested day of the trip. An agency in rural Cooke County also has trouble with advanced scheduling with Texoma Area Paratransit System (TAPS). It was also noted that 2-1-1 referrals in Cooke County are often to agencies without appropriate service or capacity.

What is the best way to enhance the user’s experience?
Better information on how to use transit and fewer transfers between providers for regional trips were expressed as the best ways to enhance the user’s experience. DCTA’s travel trainer noted that each of the options are a way to enhance the user’s experience, depending on the individual’s needs and how they learn. Different paths should be available to accommodate individual’s unique learning styles (i.e. visual, aural, verbal, and kinesthetic). For example, older adults may be an audience needing one-on-one instruction. Another method that could be helpful for potential riders are short videos (30 second clips) of what it looks like to take transit (getting to the stop, boarding, paying
the fare, etc.). These could be available online and to agencies who could help show individuals how to take transit, no matter where they are in the learning curve. They could also be shown at local businesses, Veterans Administration clinics, restaurants, banks, and senior centers. In-person, one-on-one travel training is still important.

The Denton Veterans Affairs clinic has an advocate who helps show veterans how to use transit to access the Dallas and Fort Worth clinics.

**Which technology advances are most likely to help improve transportation options for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income individuals in the next five years?**

Attendees indicated that people wouldn’t access these options because the target populations may have physical or learning disabilities that would require additional assistance in order to utilize the technology. Additionally, some individuals may not have the financial ability to purchase the necessary technology or to pay for the trip. There are platforms with transportation network companies (TNCs) for agencies to pay and schedule rides on behalf of their clients. However, there’s still room for growth. Since TNCs use personal vehicles, they are not always accessible for individuals using mobility devices such as wheelchairs. A participant mentioned that this is a people-first issue. The needs of the individuals should be considered first and then matched with a transportation option. Another participant noted that technology can’t be the only solution.

Conversely, other attendees believed that TNCs like Uber and Lyft would help improve transportation options over the next five years. A participant noted that more older adults and individuals with disabilities are using these transit options. An attendee mentioned that they provide an additional level of independence and minimize scheduling conflicts. Additionally, there’s a layer of security because the technology enables people to share their real-time location while in transit (which is important when transporting human trafficking or domestic violence victims).

d. **Priorities & Solutions**

In closing, Ms. Schlicher asked participants to rank the priorities that were most important to them or indicate if new priorities have since arisen for Denton County.

Participants ranked priorities in the following order:

1. Provide additional service in unserved areas and to underserved locations.
2. Create partnerships between transit agencies, municipalities, and community organizations to increase the accessibility of bus stops and paths to transit.
3. Conduct additional planning activities to further quantify transportation needs of residents outside of the DCTA service area and define additional coordination opportunities for existing providers throughout the county.
4. Improve awareness of services by providing education and information, including travel training.
5. Establish or improve service to regional destinations, including employment centers, and medical services in Dallas, Tarrant, and Collin counties.
6. Establish and maintain a county coordinating committee to focus on ongoing transportation needs.
7. Enhance connections among existing services to improve access within the county.
8. Expand the availability and affordability of for-hire transportation (private transportation providers such as taxis) to increase options for travel.

e. Next Steps
A point-person committee for Denton County will soon be developed. The committee will discuss and further refine Denton County transportation needs and solutions. Agencies or individuals interested in participating should contact Ms. Schlicher.

The final plan is slated for fall 2017 and implementation will begin in early 2018. The final plan will include prioritized solutions that will improve the coordination and availability of public transportation for the 16-county region.

Contact: Kelli Schlicher, AICP, Transportation Planner, North Central Texas Council of Governments; (817) 695-9287, kslicher@nctcog.org
Sarah Chadderdon, AICP, Principal Transportation Planner, North Central Texas Council of Governments; (817) 695-9180, schadderdon@nctcog.org

2. Attendee List
Advocates: Tim Swenson, Anita, Leigh Duncan-Timm
Abigail’s Arms: Rosina Salsman, Bridgette Clemons
Alzheimer’s Association of Greater Dallas: Tara Longley
Aubrey ISD: Dr. David Belding
Christian Community Action: Daphne Adams
City of The Colony: Diana Holland
City of Denton: Councilmember Sara Bagheri
City of Flower Mound: Matt Hotelling
City of Frisco: Jordan Feldman
City of Lake Dallas: Kevin Lasher
CoServ: Tracee Elrod
Denton County: Paul Bastaich
Denton County Friends of the Family: Michelle Behl
Denton County Indigent Health Care: Isabel Rodriguez
Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA): Michelle Bloomer, Anna Mosqueta, Crystal Pustejovsky
Denton County Housing Authority: Peggy Ritter, LeMaya Woods, Igna Chavez, Tangelia Caldwell, Eula Rose, Lola Davis, Cynthia Richards
Denton ISD: Barb Haflich, David Gerabagi, Courtney Martin
Fair Oaks of Denton, Inc.: Christina Trevino
Good Samaritan Society: A. Peabody
Lewisville Area Chamber: Ray Hernandez
North Central Texas Council of Governments: Sarah Chadderdon, Kelli Schlicher, Donato Perez
REACH of Denton: Murphy Hardinger
Resurrect Life, Inc.: Kari Tamburin
Serve Denton: Danita Summers
Span, Inc.: Deb Robertson, Roger Muckel
Special Abilities of North Texas: Jordan Drake
Texas Woman's University: Amy O'Keefe
United Way of Denton County: Rhett Richardson, Katie Foote
University of North Texas: Bob Brown, Rebecca Cagle, Dr. Geary Robinson
Prioritization Process

NCTCOG staff contacted stakeholders in Denton County to follow up on the outcomes of the outreach meetings that took place in April 2017. The following individuals, representing a variety of interests in Denton County, participated in the prioritization of strategies to address the needs identified.

Laurie Long, Program Manager - Community Health, Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Denton
Roger Muckel, Mobility Manager, Span, Inc.
Michelle Bloomer, Assistant Vice President - Bus Operations and Maintenance, Denton County Transportation Authority
Crystal Pustejovsky, Mobility Specialist, Denton County Transportation Authority
Debra Caudy, Executive Director, 29 Acres
Michelle Behl, Director of Outreach Advocacy, Denton County Friends of the Family
Tim Swenson, Advocate
Geary Robinson, Director of Transportation Services, UNT-Parking Services
Rebecca Cagle, Office of Disability Accommodations, University of North Texas
Murphy Hardinger, ADA/ILS Specialist, REACH of Denton
Ray Hernandez, President, Lewisville Area Chamber of Commerce
Paul Bastaich, Veterans Service Officer, Denton County Veterans Service Office
Isabel Rodriguez, Coordinator, Denton County Indigent Health Care
Diana Holland, Senior Center Coordinator, City of The Colony
Perry Singer, Center Manager, Denton Workforce Center
Barb Haflich, Social Worker, Denton ISD
Kelli Schlicher, Transportation Planner, North Central Texas Council of Governments

This document summarizes conversations during the prioritization process.

Roger Muckel, Mobility Manager with Span, Inc., indicated that the draft priorities are on point. He noted that these priorities identify issues that are larger than what one agency is able to overcome on their own. Agencies will need to work together to determine how to address these barriers to public transportation. He identified that municipalities have contacted Span to discuss providing transportation for their residents. Some municipalities aren’t aware of the level of transit needed for their residents and therefore are not comfortable with establishing service parameters (such as destinations).
Laurie Long, Program Manager for Community Health at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Denton, hosts a group called the Community Health Council. This group has been meeting consistently the last few years to discuss Denton County’s community health needs, including public transportation. This group, and its transportation subcommittee, are a good opportunity to discuss transit solutions and coordination with other Denton County agencies. She mentioned that the biggest problem is trying to get patients, particularly from outlying rural areas, to their follow-up medical appointments.

Debra Caudy, Executive Director of 29 Acres that will be home to individuals with disabilities who will need to access medical appointments, therapy, education opportunities, work, as well as other personal trips. She indicated that the individuals who will be living at their facility in Cross Roads will need a mix of transportation solutions. Debra has started to discuss potential transit solutions with local transit agencies in order to meet the range of transit needs of her future residents.

Participants agreed that agencies need to come together to discuss the existing gaps in public transportation in order to develop solutions to create a streamlined ride and better experience for riders.

Rebecca Cagle with the University of North Texas noted that we need to educate individuals about existing transportation before expanding service. Identifying individuals in the community that will advocate for public transit is key.

Prioritized strategies for Denton County that incorporate stakeholder feedback will be included in the plan document.