APPENDIX C.4

Ellis County
Access North Texas – Ellis & Navarro Counties
North Central Texas Council of Governments

Kelli Schlicher, AICP

Navarro College at Waxahachie
Waxahachie, Texas
November 9, 2016
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.
Do you or your agency work mostly in Ellis County or Navarro County?

1. Ellis County
2. Navarro County
3. Both
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
- Ellis County & Navarro County, Nov. 2016
- 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
Ellis County and Navarro 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 50%
2. Work 25%
3. Nutritional / Grocery store 0%
4. Social 8%
5. Other 17%

Access North Texas
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

26%
4%
15%
44%
11%
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 about coordination between agencies is the biggest barrier for you?

1. Knowing where to start 12%
2. Identifying appropriate contacts 40%
3. Successfully contacting other agencies 28%
4. Developing agreements between agencies 4%
5. Other 16%
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 Ellis County Priorities

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<th><strong>Top Priorities</strong></th>
<th><strong>Additional Priorities</strong></th>
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<td>1) Increased awareness of existing services</td>
<td>Marketing materials in other languages</td>
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<td>2) Improve access to jobs</td>
<td>Expand service availability for youth under 18</td>
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<td>3) Enhance existing transportation services</td>
<td>Explore partnerships to increase affordability of fares</td>
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<tr>
<td>4) Regional connection to Dallas</td>
<td>Provide public transportation through partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>5) Link key destinations in Ellis</td>
<td>Transit to VA services in Dallas</td>
</tr>
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# Your Feedback on Navarro County Priorities

## Top Priorities

1. Improve access through increased service frequencies
2. Regional transportation link to Dallas-Fort Worth
3. Improve awareness of existing services

## Additional Priorities

- Establish training program for first-time bus riders
- Create and maintain a county coordinating committee
Please Return Your Keypad!

Thank You
Questions or Comments

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Access North Texas

Ellis County and Navarro County Meeting

November 9, 2016

Waxahachie, Texas

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1. Meeting Summary
   a. Welcome

   Kelli Schlicher from the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the joint Ellis County and Navarro County meeting. Ms. Schlicher also announced that Mike Hensley with the North Central Texas Area Agency on Aging (AAA) would be hosting a public hearing after her presentation. This was an opportunity for residents and advocates to share current and future needs for older adults and individuals with disabilities in addition to transportation.

   b. Introduction to Access North Texas

   Ms. Schlicher provided a short presentation and covered the following material:
   - 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 polling questions and participated in open conversation about the public transportation needs and challenges in Ellis County and Navarro County. The polling questions and discussion are summarized below.

   **With the agency you work for, what is the highest day-to-day transportation need?**

   50% of respondents indicated that the highest day-to-day transportation need for their agency is medical trips, while 25% specified that work related trips is their highest transportation need. Regarding medical trips, attendees noted that physicians’ offices in Dallas and specialists at Parkland Hospital were particularly difficult to reach from both Ellis County and Navarro County. Attendees also noted that trips into Dallas-Fort Worth (or even within the county) can be cost prohibitive for riders with limited incomes. College representatives in attendance identified that students in Ellis County have trouble accessing campuses in Midlothian and Waxahachie. Lastly, attendees noted that individuals in Ellis County are able to find employment, however aren’t able to find transportation to get them to work.
Regarding public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals, etc., what is your primary area of concern?

44% of respondents indicated their primary area of concern was increasing coordination between agencies, while 20% specified that funding new services was their primary area of concern. The Waxahachie Senior Center noted that their partnership with STAR Transit and Senior Connect is invaluable. Both agencies help get seniors to their facility and to medical appointments, particularly in Dallas. It was noted that Ellis County veterans aren’t familiar with the available transportation options to get them to their appointments at Baylor Scott & White – Waxahachie and the Dallas Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Lastly, access to employment for individuals working the third shift is especially difficult since there isn’t any public transportation provided during these hours.

What funding approach will have the biggest impact on improving access to transit?

44% of attendees answered that a focus on integrating funding sources (Aging, Workforce, Medicaid, etc.) would have the biggest impact on improving access to transit, while 26% answered that a focus on getting additional federal or state investment in transit would have the biggest impact. Attendees noted that there is not sufficient funding for transit for either Ellis County or Navarro County. A potential solution to this is coordinating and integrating the current sources of funds from Aging, Workforce, Medicaid, etc. in order to increase efficiency and capacity. Local government has not considered public transportation a priority for local funds.

What method could improve the awareness of available services?

36% of respondents indicated that a public marketing campaign is the best method to improve awareness, while 28% answered that a centralized location to receive information about transit would be the best method. A participant noted that Ellis County’s information housed in the Dallas-area 2-1-1 needs to be updated, however she’s not found the correct contact at 2-1-1 to update the information. It was mentioned that regular meetings with service agencies and transit providers would be an effective way to improve awareness as well as increase coordination. Marketing outreach to veterans would help them access services locally and in Dallas-Fort Worth. A potential solution is to have healthcare providers and service providers for adults with intellectual disabilities distribute information about available transportation services. For Navarro County, it was suggested that posting at laundromats and mailing information were effective ways to disseminate information.

What about coordination between agencies is the biggest barrier for you?

40% of respondents indicated that identifying appropriate contacts was the biggest barrier to coordination, while 28% indicated that developing agreements between agencies was the biggest barrier. Agencies in attendance noted that trying to identify the appropriate contact, particularly in larger agencies, can be challenging. Memorandums of Understanding (MOU), while necessary for organizations to coordinate and identify what each party is responsible for, are often seen as cumbersome. Lastly, a transit provider mentioned that determining how additional transportation services will be paid for by the requesting agency can also be a barrier to developing new partnerships for coordination.
What is the best way to enhance the user’s experience?
32% of attendees voted for better information on how to use transit, while 28% voted for fewer transfers between providers for regional trips. Discussion centered on transit agencies providing better information about their specific service parameters (hours of service, areas covered, how to access service or register, etc.). As discussed in the question about improving awareness of available services, if better information was available other agencies could help disseminate that information to potential riders. Attendees noted that information about how to make regional trips to Dallas-Fort Worth, which require transferring to another provider, would also improve riders’ experience and confidence in the transit system. In Navarro County, riders are concerned about booking return trips based on limited operating hours.

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?
50% of attendees believed that most people wouldn’t access these options because technology is not economically accessible for many of the individuals they work with on a regular basis. 29% of attendees voted for transportation network companies (TNC) like Uber and Lyft. Not all in attendance were familiar with the technological advances and TNCs. Attendees agreed that there is added liability with utilizing TNCs since there isn’t vetting or driver training equivalent to what local transit agencies require. For riders with intellectual disabilities, a model similar to Meals on Wheels where the same volunteer driver can establish a relationship and provide consistent transportation could be a better solution. Participants felt that this model would also work well for seniors. Additionally, participants were concerned that TNCs wouldn’t be an accessible option for individuals who utilize wheelchairs but cannot transfer themselves into a vehicle without a lift or ramp. Lastly, in both Ellis County and Navarro County, there was the additional concern that limited access to the internet and/or phone service in the rural areas would be a barrier to accessing a TNC.

d. Priorities & Solutions
In closing, Ms. Schlicher asked participants to rank the priorities (through a dot exercise) that were most important to them or indicate if new priorities have since arisen for both Ellis County and Navarro County.

Participants ranked priorities for Ellis County in the following order:
1. Improve transportation options to access jobs within Ellis County, including employment locations in Waxahachie and Ennis.
2. Explore local service to connect key destinations in Waxahachie, including uptown, downtown, the new Baylor Hospital (that opened in 2014), and Navarro College.
3. Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need.
4. Improve public awareness of existing and new public transportation services, including raising awareness that services are not limited to older adults and individuals with disabilities.
5. Expand or introduce new transportation options that enable regional connections to Dallas for employment and medical services.
6. Evaluate different ways to provide public transportation services through partnerships with public and private transportation operators.
7. Enhance existing transportation service, expand service hours, or introduce new service within the county to better connect local communities.
8. Create language-specific marketing to reach individuals who have limited English proficiency.
9. Provide transportation to VA services in Dallas.
10. Expand service availability for youth under age 18.

Participants ranked priorities for Navarro County in the following order:
1. Improve local and county access through increased service frequencies or hours of service to address community and job access needs and access to medical care within Navarro County.
2. Increase awareness of existing services through a countywide education initiative.
3. Regional transportation link to the Dallas-Fort Worth area that can allow for greater employment opportunities and connections with regional transportation services.
4. Create and maintain a county coordinating committee to focus on ongoing transportation needs.
5. Establish training program that will assist first time bus riders in learning how public transportation operates and how to schedule services.

e. Next Steps
A point-person committee each for Ellis County and Navarro County will soon be developed. The committees will discuss and further refine Ellis County and Navarro 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 will improve the coordination and availability of public transportation for the 16-county region.

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

2. Attendee List
Angels at Home: Rose Rash
Community for Permanent Supportive Housing: Brenda Catlett
Community Transit Services: Arlette Cobb, Katie Ragan
Corsicana ISD: Chris Gibbs
Ellis County: Judge Carol Bush, Sara Garcia, Joseph Jackson, Ted Kantor
Ellis County Veterans Services Office: Nimchie Alce
Indigent Healthcare Program for Ellis County: Terri Klein
Lakes Regional MHMR: Crystal Richardson
Lakes Regional Community Center: LaZendra Rhodes
Midlothian ISD: Jim Norris
Navarro College: Kenneth Martin, Alex Kajstura
North Central Texas Area Agency on Aging: Mike Hensley
North Central Texas Council of Governments: Sarah Chadderdon, Kelli Schlicher, Edgar Hernandez, Chris Reed
STAR Transit: Ashley Ando
Texas Workforce Solutions: Monte Hurt, Angela McCoy
The Salvation Army of Ellis County: Frank Zuniga
United Way of Ellis County: Casey Ballard
Waxahachie ISD: Jane Hamilton
Waxahachie Senior Center: Jeanee Smiles
Waxahachie Workforce Center: Jana Edrington-Koenecke
Prioritization Process

NCTCOG staff contacted stakeholders in Ellis County to follow up on the outcomes of the outreach meeting that took place on Wednesday, November 9, 2016 in Waxahachie. The following individuals, representing a variety of interests in Ellis County, participated in the prioritization of strategies to address the needs identified.

Daniel Edwards, Executive Director, Community Transit Services (CTS)
Omega Hawkins, Executive Director, STAR Transit
Sara Garcia, Special Projects, Ellis County
Jana Edrington-Koennecke, Center Manager, Waxahachie Workforce Center
Jeannie Smiles, Director, Waxahachie Senior Center
Casey Bullard, Executive Director, United Way of West Ellis County
Kenneth Martin, President Ellis County Campuses, Navarro College
Ellsworth Huling, Veterans Service Officer, Ellis County
Terri Klein, Coordinator, Indigent Healthcare Program for Ellis County
Crystal Richardson, Intake/Benefits Coordinator, Lakes Regional MHMR
Kelli Schlicher, Transportation Planner, North Central Texas Council of Governments

This document summarizes conversations during the prioritization process.

On May 23, 2017, Jeannie Smiles, Director of the Waxahachie Senior Center, noted that the draft priorities seemed on point. Getting local older adults to their medical appointments is a high priority for her. Additionally, she sees the potential to build partnerships with pharmacies to help transport older adults to pick up their medications. Currently, the Waxahachie Senior Center has a contract with Senior Connect to help provide affordable rides for older adults so that they may join for meals. The Waxahachie Senior Center attracts older adults from a large area, including southern Dallas County. When asked about CTS and STAR Transit potentially coordinating services, she mentioned that STAR Transit does a good job transporting older adults in Ellis County.

On May 26, 2017, NCTCOG staff spoke with Omega Hawkins (Executive Director of STAR Transit) and Daniel Edwards (Executive Director of CTS). Omega mentioned that STAR Transit only does contract service through their sister organization Senior Connect, Medicaid and the city of Hutchins since they are not the county’s transportation provider. STAR Transit’s new FedEx route in Hutchins doesn’t enter Ellis County, but it may draw some ridership from Ellis County residents. Lastly, it would be
helpful if CTS shared some information about its transit service and other programs so that STAR Transit staff can make appropriate referrals.

Daniel mentioned that the order of the priorities looked correct and are in-line with what CTS is doing or plans to do. CTS has a new contract with North Texas Behavioral Health Authority providing emergent, same-day trips to Ellis County and Navarro County clients seeking treatment in Dallas County. Daniel also mentioned that Navarro College students at the Waxahachie campus have trouble getting to medical appointments and the grocery store. CTS updates their info listed at 2-1-1 annually and offered to share transportation and programmatic info with STAR Transit. In accordance with their other contracts, CTS is required to develop a strategic plan. Thus far, CTS has conducted four town hall meetings to discuss the importance of transportation in their 10-county Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) region. Daniel anticipates the strategic plan will be complete by the end of the summer.

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