Access North Texas – Erath, Hood and Somervell Counties
North Central Texas Council of Governments

Kelli Schlicher, AICP

Hood County Library
Granbury, Texas
February 15, 2017
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 focus on Erath, Hood, or Somervell County?

A. Erath County
B. Hood County
C. Somervell County
D. Multiple counties
### What type of agency do you work for?

1. Local or state government - 43%
2. Transportation provider - 19%
3. Healthcare provider - 5%
4. Non-profit - 0%
5. Social service organization - 10%
6. Community advocate / community member - 19%
7. Other - 5%

![Bar chart showing the distribution of agency types.]

---

**Access North Texas**

C-Hood & Somervell 6.6
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

Erath, Hood & Somervell Counties, Feb. 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
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
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></th>
<th>28%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>32%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></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

38% 29% 13% 13% 8%
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 Erath County 2013 Priorities

**Top Priorities**

1) Improve regional connections

2) County coordinating committee

3) Decrease waiting times

4) Expand service operating hours

**Additional Priorities**

Driver recruitment and retention programs

Improve awareness of existing transit service
## Your Feedback on 2013 Hood & Somervell County Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Priorities</th>
<th>Additional Priorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Increase service</td>
<td>Improve awareness of available transit service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) County coordinating committee</td>
<td>Explore ways to make bus passes easier to use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More efficient routes for senior center access</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
(817) 695-9180
schadderdon@nctcog.org

www.accessnorthtexas.org
1. Meeting Summary
a. Welcome
   Kelli Schlicher from the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the Erath County, Hood County, and Somervell 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. The AAA public meeting 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 Erath, Hood, and Somervell Counties. The polling questions and discussion are summarized below.

   With the agency you work for, what is the highest day-to-day transportation need?
   The majority of respondents identified medical trips as their highest day-to-day transportation need with work-related trips coming in as the second highest transportation need. Attendees noted that out-of-county medical trips (to both Tarrant County and Dallas County) and return trips home are difficult to schedule due to distance and availability.
   Regarding medical trips, attendees also noted that trips to the Veterans Affairs Hospitals are a high need for their clients.

   Representatives from Hood County’s workforce office noted that individuals are sometimes unable to get to job training programs. Attendees also noted that even trips within the county can be cost prohibitive for riders with limited incomes. The Transit System (TTS) currently serves Hood County and Somervell County. Their fare ranges...
from $6 to $10 each way for travel within Hood County and from $6 to $8 within Somervell County, but the actual cost to operate that service is higher. Seniors (60+) in both counties are eligible for a 50% discount. Additional funding (such as local contribution from cities) would be required to reduce fares.

Regarding public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals, what is your primary area of concern? 50% of respondents indicated that their primary area of concern was funding new services, while 29% specified that improving awareness of available services was their primary area of concern. Attendees noted a lack of available services and limited weekend service for residents has forced some riders to use multiple social service providers to reach their destinations. Attendees also noted that some of their clients are unable to get to last-minute medical appointments through public transportation because trips should be scheduled one day in advance. Representatives from both City and Rural Rides (CARR, serving Erath County) and TTS noted that scheduling a trip one day in advance is not required. Each agency will accommodate same day service when possible, if vehicles and drivers are not already scheduled to serve other customers.

What funding approach will have the biggest impact on improving access to transit? 48% of attendees answered that a focus on getting additional federal or state investment in transit would have the biggest impact on improving access to transit, while 26% answered that a focus on getting additional local government investment in transit would have the biggest impact. Attendees were interested in obtaining additional federal or state investment for general purpose trips (groceries, recreation, dining, etc.) to increase the options available to riders and to fit community needs. Attendees indicated a need to increase local government investment to improve transit access within counties. Additional funding could be used to for supplemental services, such as vehicle for-hire programs (taxis, Uber, Lyft, etc.).

What method could improve the awareness of available services? 40% of respondents indicated that public marketing campaigns are the best method to improve awareness, while 32% answered that a centralized location to receive information about transit would be the best method. A participant noted that targeted marketing to local agencies would be a viable option because they’re already tied into the community and can help distribute information. Agencies include social service agencies, local governments and medical providers. 2-1-1, housed in the United Way of Tarrant County, is a resource that could help disseminate information about local resources. Each agency is responsible for keeping their information up-to-date in the 2-1-1 network.

What about coordination between agencies is the biggest barrier for you? 38% of respondents indicated that knowing where to start was the biggest barrier to coordination, while 29% indicated that identifying appropriate contacts was their biggest barrier. Participants noted that all of the choices would apply to them and expanded by indicating that knowing how to connect with the appropriate contact within an agency is a huge coordination barrier. It was also noted that once you know where to start, most of the information on a resource guide is not up-to-date and establishing a procedure to
update available resources is vital for coordination. An attendee mentioned that understanding the different roles of different agencies would ultimately reduce service duplication since there are a lot of opportunities for funding. Establishing roles on the funding side would also contribute to the reduction of service duplication and free up resources for a variety of projects.

**What is the best way to enhance the user’s experience?**

65% of attendees voted for better information on how to use transit, while 22% voted for additional assistance from the driver or personal assistant. A majority of the attendees voted for better information on how to use transit because of their experience with coming across resources that are not up-to-date. These particular resources (not identified) also provide little information on how to connect with current appropriate contacts and make it difficult to refer a client over to those resources or agencies.

**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?**

39% of attendees believed that most people won’t access these options. Conversely, another 17% of attendees indicated that web or smartphone apps with information on different providers and driverless cars, buses, or shuttles would be the most likely to improve transportation options. The majority of the attendees indicated that most people wouldn’t access these options because many of their customers don’t have the appropriate knowledge to work the technology in smartphones or apps and the newest technologies can often be challenging. Also, smartphones are not economically accessible for many of the individuals they work with on a regular basis. An attendee noted that because many of the seniors she works with have had their licenses taken away; driverless cars, buses, or shuttles sound like a great way for seniors to get around.

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 Erath, Hood, and Somervell Counties.

Participants ranked priorities for Hood County and Somervell County in the following order:

1. Increase service in Hood County and Somervell County to address access to all activities; identify funding sources.
2. Improve awareness of available public transportation services (Hood County & Somervell County).
3. Meeting of a coordinating committee to discuss ongoing transportation needs (Hood County & Somervell County).
4. Explore ways to make bus passes easier to use (Hood County & Somervell County).
5. Coordinate more efficient transportation routes for senior center access (Hood County & Somervell County).

Participants ranked priorities for Erath County in the following order:
1. Improve availability of connections from Stephenville and Dublin to regional destinations including medical services, job access, and education (Erath County).

2. Expand service operating hours beyond 8:00 am to 5:00 pm to address community and job access needs within Erath County.

3. Decrease waiting times for public transportation from its current two-hour time window (Erath County).

4. Develop a driver recruitment and retention program to address difficulties CARR faces in hiring and retaining drivers (Erath County).

5. Create and maintain a county coordinating committee to focus on ongoing transportation needs (Erath County).

6. Improve awareness of existing public transit services and expand opportunities for partnerships to grow transit service (Erath County).

e. Next Steps
A point-person committee for Erath County as well as Hood and Somervell Counties will soon be developed. The committee will discuss and further refine 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.

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

2. Attendee List
Advocates: D. Early, Ann Blay, Jak Dandron, Jeanie Jones, Michael Ross
Area Agency on Aging: Shannon Byrd
Choices Clinic & Life Resource Center: Heather Dawes, Ashley Graves
City and Rural Rides: Rhonda Kelton, Michael Kelly
Dublin Chamber: Tom Gordon
Erath County: Tami Barker
Granbury Housing Authority: Julia K. Richardson, Sheri Simpson, Larry Richardson
Hood County Committee on Aging: Wanda Nail
Hood County: Judge Darrell Cockerham
Hood County Senior Center: Barb Facer, Rebbecca Freeman, Loyd Nail
Lake Granbury Medical Center: Derrick E. Cuenca
Mission Granbury: Christi Durant, Ken Horton
North Central Texas Area Agency on Aging: Mike Hensley
North Central Texas Council of Governments: Sarah Chadderdon, Kelli Schlicher, Donato Perez
Paluxy River Children's Advocacy Center: Kerrie Stannell, Elizabeth Johnson
Pecan Valley Centers for Behavioral and Developmental HealthCare: Alecia Morrison, Allen Gould
Ride N Safe Medical Transport, LLC: Cliff Montemayor
Somervell County Committee on Aging, Inc.: Pam Baker
Texas Department of Transportation: Tommie Fugate, Johanna Pike
The Transit System: Joan Rohrbaugh, Terry Vannoy
United Way of Hood County: Becky Mauldin
Prioritization Process

NCTCOG staff contacted stakeholders in Hood County and Somervell County to follow up on the outcomes of the outreach meeting that took place on February 15, 2017 in Granbury. The following individuals, representing a variety of interests in Hood County and Somervell County, participated in the prioritization of strategies to address the needs identified.

Mike Scott, President/CEO, Granbury Chamber of Commerce
Julia K. Richardson, Executive Director, Granbury Housing Authority
Pam Baker, Project Director, Somervell Committee on Aging, Inc.
Joyce Stark, Program Service Coordinator, Hood County Committee on Aging, Inc.
Elizabeth Johnson, Program Director, Paluxy River Children’s Advocacy Center
Alecia Morrison, Director of IDD Provider Services, Pecan Valley Centers for Behavioral and Departmental HealthCare
Becky Mauldin, Executive Director, United Way of Hood County
Derinda Long, General Manager, The Transit System (TTS)
Linda Mallon, Hood and Somervell County Veterans Service Officer, Somervell County
Kelli Schlicher, Transportation Planner, North Central Texas Council of Governments

This document summarizes conversations during the prioritization process.

On June 5, 2017, Julia Richardson (Executive Director of Granbury Housing) and Elizabeth Johnson (Program Director of Paluxy River Children’s Advocacy Center) noted that additional capacity on transit was the greatest need. They mentioned that a bus route empowers the rider with its fixed schedule and known stops. A local bus route could help individuals reach local destinations. Additionally, coordinated regional trips to Fort Worth could improve access to regional services. The current transportation system (operated by TTS) is expensive to the rider (compared to fixed route) and doesn’t have the flexibility to accommodate same-day emergent trips. The Paluxy River Children’s Advocacy Center has a contract with TTS to provide trips to clients seeking emergency medical care, often at Cook Children’s in Fort Worth. These trips are currently funded by donations, but this could change if the program continues to grow.

On June 6, 2017, TTS staff identified that their largest challenge is recruiting and retaining drivers. Currently TTS advertises driver positions by running local ads, placing yard signs, and workforce ads on their website. Hiring new drivers can be challenging because of the time needed (a couple months) to onboard and train the new driver. TTS has noticed that some of their drivers that have recently retired are retiring for the
second time (i.e. driving for TTS was their second career). Staff did note that increasing their pay scale has helped some, but they still aren’t able to pay what larger urban systems are paying their drivers. Another challenge TTS faces within their service area is that residents don’t understand that their transit service is for the general public. TTS has tried to coordinate some public service announcements with radio stations, but the stations have not responded. Lastly, TTS had a contract with the County Veteran’s Service Office to provide trips for veterans to Veteran’s Administration services, but rides were never scheduled with TTS. TTS offers a discount for seniors for local trips within Hood County or Somervell County. There is no discount offered for regional trips.

Alecia Morrison (Director of IDD Provider Services for Pecan Valley Centers) noted via email that her client’s largest gaps in service are local and regional medical appointments, general purpose trips, and weekend trips. Many of their clients do not have Medicaid, which includes a transportation benefit for approved medical appointments. She also believed that additional training for the drivers to offer better assistance would be helpful, particularly for individuals using mobility devices.

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