

# JOHNSON COUNTY

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Access North Texas is to improve public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. These populations can have difficulty finding public transportation options that connect them to doctor's appointments, work opportunities and education or job training. This plan identifies where these transportation connections do not exist or could be improved within Johnson County. This chapter will give an overview of the planning process, research conducted and collected, the public outreach meeting, the transportation poll used to collect personal input on public transit needs, and the prioritized strategies for Johnson County.

### PROCESS

This plan is required by federal guidance to be updated every four years. The plan must be developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors; individuals with disabilities; representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation; human services providers and other members of the public. The plan is updated to address current public transportation needs of the residents of Johnson County. Through the process and methods described, prioritized strategies were developed so that future public transportation projects can be implemented when federal and state funding becomes available. Two different types of research were conducted during this plan update: data-based and people-based.

Data-based research included obtaining, reviewing,

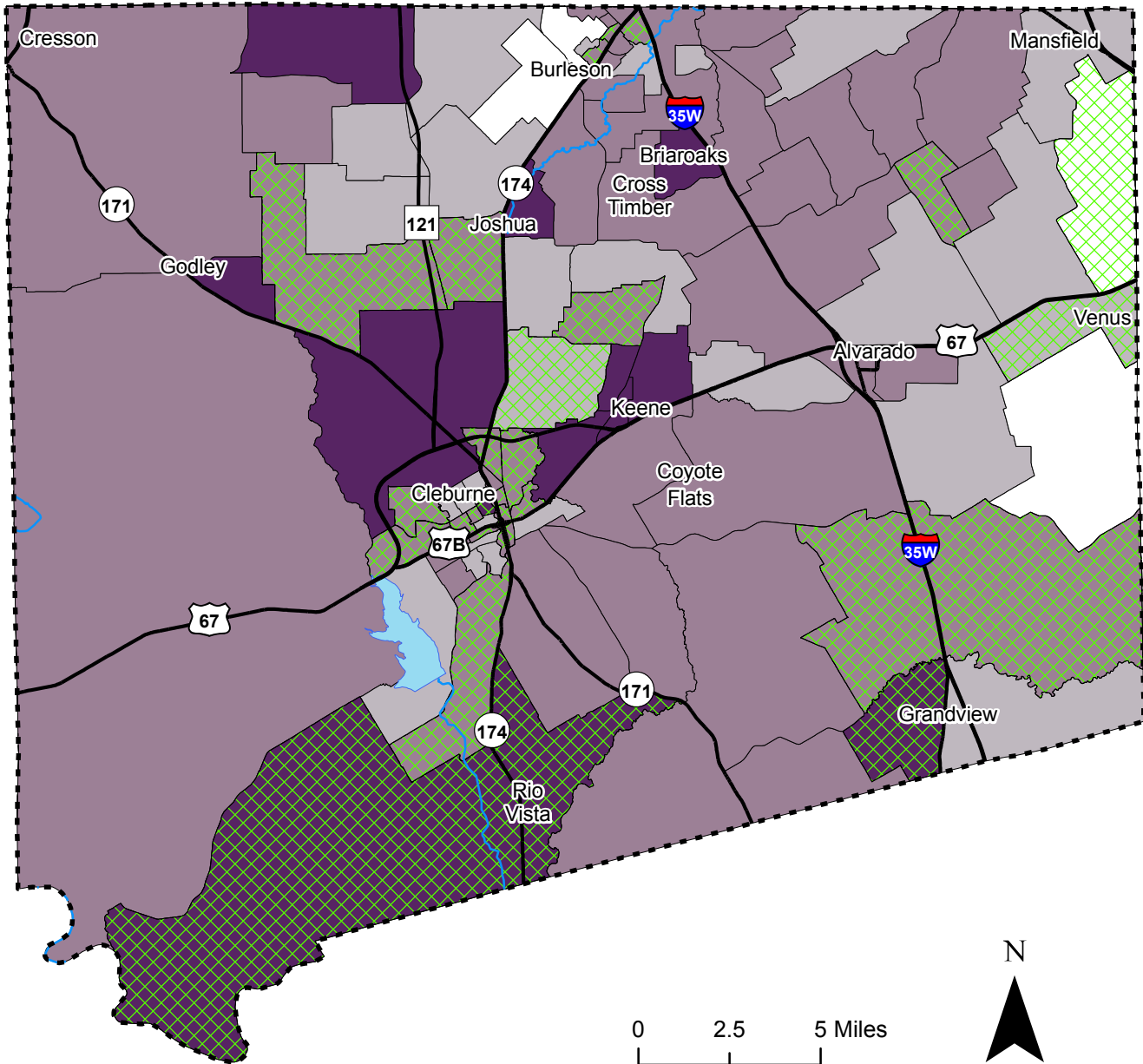
and analyzing Census data; using Census data to develop a mapping tool to identify locations where transit-dependent individuals may live; and identifying existing public transportation providers. The people-based research included reaching out to communities, organizations, and individuals to obtain feedback about the existing public transportation system and how it could be improved. Feedback was obtained through a public outreach meeting and a transportation poll. Through an interactive process, stakeholders prioritized concerns about transit access.

### RESEARCH

#### The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)

The TAIT was developed to identify locations with certain demographic factors that may indicate a greater need for public transportation. The populations of individuals over age 65, residents below the poverty line, and persons with disabilities were each compared to the regional percentage of the population in that demographic. A map was created based on areas that were above the regional percentage in zero, one, two, or all three of the demographic categories. The more categories that an area is deemed above the regional percentage, the more likely it is that area is to need transit. Zero car households was provided as a supplemental layer to identify households above the regional percentage that do not having a working vehicle available. The tool is useful in identifying groups of people who could benefit from transit services, but is not intended to be the deciding factor in decisions regarding public transportation.

# Johnson County Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT)



**Variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities**

- All Variables At or Below Regional Percentage
- One Variable Above Regional Percentage
- Two Variables Above Regional Percentage
- All Variables Above Regional Percentage
- Zero Car Households Above Regional Percentage

The Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT) is a preliminary screening tool to identify areas that may need additional analysis when considering transportation-disadvantaged groups in a plan, project, or program. The TAIT displays Census block groups above the regional percentage for three variables: Age 65 and Over, Below Poverty, and Persons with Disabilities.

**Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates**



In Johnson County, there are census block groups where the populations of individuals age 65 and over, below the poverty line, and with disabilities are all above the regional percentages. The areas above the regional percentage in all three variables are mostly in the central and southern part of the county, including along the SH 174 corridor in Rio Vista, Cleburne, and Joshua, along I35W in Grandview, north of US 67 near Keene, east of SH 171 near Godley, west of I35W in Briaroaks, and in rural Johnson county along the Chisholm Trail Parkway. The census block west of Rio Vista and south of US 67, and two census block groups southwest of Mansfield are above the regional percentage in persons below the poverty line and persons with disabilities. The remainder of county census block groups with two variables above the regional percentage are persons age 65 and over and persons with disabilities. Generally, areas with a single variable above the regional percentage in the eastern and northern parts of the county are persons with disabilities. The areas with a single variable above the regional percentage in the central part of the county are primarily persons age 65 and over, with some block groups in Cleburne having a higher than regional percentage of persons below the poverty line. Zero car households above the regional percentage are mostly located along SH 174 in the central and southern parts of Johnson County. In eastern Johnson County, zero car households above the regional percentage are found along I35W and US 67. The highest proportion of persons living below the poverty line is found within Cleburne. Additionally, the highest proportions of persons with disabilities live within Cleburne and between Godley and Joshua.

### **Additional Demographic and Commuter Information**

Johnson County continues to experience a steady amount of growth. According to the American Community Survey's 2015 5-year estimates, since the 2010 Census, Johnson County's population has increased by 3.0%. In comparison, the 16-county region has grown 6.3% in that same time period. Public trans-

portation needs will change as the population grows. Within Johnson County, 5.4% of residents speak English less than very well. Efforts to promote existing or new transit services should include strategies to reach this population.

According to U.S. Census employer information as of 2014, Johnson County is home to around 41,000 jobs, with approximately 17,000 of those workers living within the county. Nearly 24,000 workers commute into the county, while 48,000 commute out of the county to access their jobs. About 38% of Johnson County workers live within 10 miles of their jobs, and the majority of commuters into the county enter from the north and northwest. The economy in Johnson County is fairly diverse, with educational and manufacturing jobs each providing around 14% of the jobs in the county. The county's employees are fairly well educated too, with 40% of workers having some college experience or a degree.

### **Transportation Resources**

The main public transportation provider is City/County Transportation, which provides a commuter bus route to downtown Fort Worth and public transportation within Johnson County, Monday through Friday. Transportation is available to the general public as well as older adults and individuals with disabilities. Saturday service is available for the city of Cleburne. The commuter route has stops in Cleburne, Joshua, Burleson, the Fort Worth Veterans Clinic, and the Intermodal Transportation Center in downtown Fort Worth. Another commuter option, provided by the Fort Worth Transportation Authority (FWTA), is vanpools. Johnson County is the origin for 16 vanpools operated by FWTA.

See Appendix B4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

## OUTREACH MEETING

The public meeting for Johnson County was held on October 24, 2016 at the Cleburne Conference Center in Cleburne. 114 invitations were mailed and emailed to interested parties throughout the county. Meeting announcements and information were also posted online, and invitees were encouraged to share the invitation with partner organizations and clients to help promote the meetings. A total of 24 people attended the meeting.

Following a general welcome and presentation about public transit within the county, staff led an interactive keypad polling session to instigate discussion of transportation issues with attendees. Based on discussion question answers, community members prioritized current issues in the county and re-prioritized strategies from the 2013 Access North Texas Plan.

Comments and discussion in the public outreach meeting identified that the main public transportation concern is expanding current services. Additional capacity is needed to provide transportation to job opportunities (within Johnson County and into Tarrant County), particularly for alternative shifts; medical appointments in Tarrant County; educational opportunities in Johnson County; and a connection to Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport via downtown Fort Worth. Local governments have not considered public transportation a priority for local funds. Additionally, subsidized fares for low-income individuals would help improve their ability to access public transit.

## TRANSPORTATION POLL

A transportation poll was also available to residents and stakeholders, online and in paper, and available in English and Spanish. The poll collected first-hand data about public transportation in the region from riders and organizations that work with transit-dependent populations. Individual poll data revealed personal experiences with transportation. Polls completed by organizations on behalf of their clients explained issues seen by advocates of the people served by each

organization. Both forms of the poll provide personal views of the public transportation system.

Johnson County residents submitted eleven responses to the transportation poll. The average age of the respondents is 48, with the youngest 30 and oldest 72. All eleven respondents said they drive themselves and four responded they get a ride with a friend or family member for their transportation needs. Two respondents cited that they have missed trips in the past six months, with both responding they missed medical appointments. One respondent said they missed trips due to not having a car or someone to drive available, and that available public transportation does not meet their needs. Two respondents would be interested in seeing local bus service and commuter bus service, with one respondent interested in a community wide dial-a-ride system.

## HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The strategies below identify ways to address the most important public transportation needs stakeholders thought should be implemented over the next few years. These strategies build upon the progress that has taken place since the 2013 Access North Texas plan and should be referenced when state and federal funds for public transportation become available.

### Johnson County Prioritized Strategies

**Johnson Strategy 1** Expand hours of operation in the evenings to accommodate alternate or third shifts, including coordination with employers

**Johnson Strategy 2** Explore partnerships with local employers, medical centers, cities, and other agencies to fund additional transit services

**Johnson Strategy 3** Develop additional action plans to increase transit services as well as review governance of City/County Transportation

**Johnson Strategy 4** Create and maintain a coordinating committee to discuss ongoing transportation needs

**Johnson Strategy 5** Identify a point-person to develop relationships with local agencies to improve

coordination and access to services, jobs and education within Johnson County, as well as regional connections

**Johnson Strategy 6** Work with an existing transit provider to improve the connection between Johnson County and Fort Worth for medical appointments and work

**Johnson Strategy 7** Work with an existing transit provider to improve the connection between Johnson County, downtown Fort Worth, and the airport

**Johnson Strategy 8** Develop partnerships with non-profits, employers, and other partners to make fares more affordable for very low-income individuals

**Johnson Strategy 9** Educate local officials on available transit services, local demand, opportunities to leverage funding, and opportunities for economic development with transit

**Johnson Strategy 10** Work with 2-1-1 at least biannually to ensure transportation resources are up-to-date

**Johnson Strategy 11** Conduct targeted marketing to local agencies about existing transportation resources

## Regional Strategies for Coordinated Public Transportation

Much like the county strategies, the regional strategies may also be applicable to Johnson County.

**Regional Strategy 1** In areas with no public transit service, assess community needs and implement transit

**Regional Strategy 2** Continue and expand projects that have a no-wrong-door approach to accessing transit or information about available transit

**Regional Strategy 3** Create partnerships to simplify regional trips and reduce the number of transfers between providers

**Regional Strategy 4** Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need

**Regional Strategy 5** Work towards uniform, regional fares to simplify and reduce the cost of regional trips for riders

**Regional Strategy 6** Advocate to integrate funding

sources to maximize efficiency and increase available affordable public transportation

**Regional Strategy 7** Identify, evaluate, and implement where appropriate non-traditional ways to deliver public transportation service, including partnerships among public transit agencies, private transportation providers, and transportation network companies

**Regional Strategy 8** Identify, recruit, educate, and support influential champions for public transportation (elected officials, community leaders, or business leaders) to promote and support public transit through leadership or policy initiatives and to advocate for increasing investment in public transit

## Implementing the Plan

Transportation providers and local stakeholders will collaborate to determine next steps, form needed partnerships, identify and pursue funding, and ultimately implement selected strategies. Organizations that want to implement a strategy listed in this plan will need to develop strong partnerships with transportation providers, stakeholder agencies, communities, and counties. NCTCOG staff is available to help organizations identify potential partners and coordination opportunities. Organizations should also identify potential funding sources, which can be a mix of private and public funds, including funds from local, state, and federal sources. Local funds from public and private sources are important to demonstrate a community or organizational commitment to implementing specific strategies. Local funds are especially important to leverage state and federal dollars. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and NCTCOG have regular calls for projects to award federal funds that support projects and strategies listed in this plan.

## Characteristics of a highly competitive project:

- Is multi-year. A three year request is recommended for projects providing transit service;
- Identifies an existing public transit provider or existing non-profit transportation provider when proposing to provide transit service;

- Targets individuals with lower incomes for requests of Urbanized Area Formula Program (Job Access/Reverse Commute projects) funds;
- Targets older adults and individuals with disabilities for requests of Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds; and
- Supports one or more strategies outlined in this plan.

If a project is funded through NCTCOG or Tx-DOT, staff will document the project funding in the Transportation Improvement Program, coordinate necessary approvals, develop contract agreements, and work with implementing agencies to manage the project and all compliance activities associated with federal or state funding.

## **APPENDIX**

For more detailed information about Johnson County, please see Appendix C-Johnson, available online at [www.accessnorthtexas.org](http://www.accessnorthtexas.org). The Public Transportation Toolbox (see Appendix B-3) highlights transit services that can be implemented in the near term to meet specific needs within Johnson County.

See Appendix B-4, Private Carriers for a list of private transportation providers operating in the 16-county region. These private providers are an additional transportation option that individuals can use for personal trips (if cost-effective), or organizations can contract with to provide specific service for clients.

See Appendix B-5, Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool, for additional information on how the tool was developed.

See Appendix B-6, Transportation Poll, for more information about the transportation poll.