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

Kelli Schlicher, AICP

STAR Transit Headquarters
Terrell, Texas
March 13, 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.
What type of agency do you work for?

1. Local or state government 38%
2. Transportation provider 25%
3. Healthcare provider 0%
4. Non-profit 6%
5. Social service organization 0%
6. Community advocate / community member 0%
7. Other 31%
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

Kaufman County, Mar. 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
Kaufman 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?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Nutritional / Grocery store</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
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Access North Texas
C-Kaufman9.12
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
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
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 Kaufman County Priorities

## Top Priorities

1. Improve public awareness of available transit services
2. Modify Kaufman Trolley to address low ridership
3. Improve access to local employment destinations
4. Increase local transit options
5. Explore opportunities for regional connections

## Additional Priorities

- Maintain and improve transit options for older adults
- Improve availability and affordability of transit to VA services in Dallas
Please Return Your Keypad!

Thank you
Questions or Comments

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www.accessnorthtexas.org
Access North Texas
Kaufman County Meeting
March 13, 2017
Terrell, 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 Kaufman County meeting.

   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 Kaufman County. The polling questions and discussion are summarized below.

   With the agency you work for, what is the highest day-to-day transportation need?
   58% of respondents indicated that the highest day-to-day transportation need for their agency is work trips, while 21% specified that medical trips is their highest transportation need. Regarding work trips, the Workforce Solutions clients in the rural areas are not able to get to their office in Terrell in order to find job opportunities. Once these individuals find a job, they need transportation to work. Lakes Regional MHMR identified that there is an early morning limitation on the existing transportation service. Timeliness of arrival is important for an individual to maintain employment. STAR Transit’s service begins at 6:00 am in Kaufman County. Consequently, early morning (6:30 am) shifts for service industry employees are not well accommodated by the current hours of operation. Lakes Regional MHMR also identified that morning work commutes have not be accommodated because previously scheduled medical appointments have filled STAR Transit’s morning capacity. A representative from Kaufman Economic Development Corporation noted that there are approximately 4,200 jobs within Kaufman and many works travel into Kaufman. It was also mentioned that trips to the food bank and for shopping are important. The Wal-Mart stop on the Kaufman Trolley is the most utilized.
Regarding public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals, etc., what is your primary area of concern?

39% of respondents indicated that their primary area of concern was improving awareness of available services, while 28% specified that funding new services was their primary area of concern. As noted in the previous question, STAR Transit’s service hours does not match the early morning demand (6:00 am) for local work trips. Overall, morning demand exceeds STAR Transit’s current availability. There are challenges that exist with properly connecting concentrations of people and employers via transit. STAR Transit is in the initial planning stages for a Terrell/Kaufman connection. There is also an opportunity to explore a local circulator benefiting Terrell residents and local employers. Riders can call STAR Transit up to a month in advance to schedule medical and dialysis trips which can fill most of STAR Transit’s capacity leaving fewer trips for other purposes.

Additional marketing about available transportation services could help raise awareness about how residents can access STAR Transit’s services. Attendees recommended leaving marketing materials in new resident packets, grocery stores, county courthouse, and churches. Some churches are using their buses to help parishioners to local services and hospitals. Another participant recommended that STAR Transit add the hours of operation as well as the times an individual can schedule a ride to their Facebook page.

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

47% 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 37% answered that a focus on getting additional federal or state investment in transit would have the biggest impact. Regarding integrating funding sources, awareness of available transit services could help increase the opportunity to expand existing service. Currently, both the county and some local municipalities financially support transit service. Together, these local contributions help STAR Transit access federal funds through the Texas Department of Transportation and the North Central Texas Council of Governments.

An attendee noted that additional federal investment is important because that’s where a large portion of the funding is available. However, federal funding is often confusing due to the associated regulations. Lastly, when governments are considering infrastructure investments, public transportation should be included.

What method could improve the awareness of available services?

55% of respondents indicated that a public marketing campaign is the best method to improve awareness, while 30% answered that targeted marketing to local agencies would be the best method. Those in attendance identified the following agencies that could benefit from STAR Transit’s marketing campaign (such as posters): Workforce Solutions, Lakes Regional MHMR, Health and Human Services and their Welfare office, housing authorities, food banks, cities, churches, chambers of commerce, Wal-Mart, Brookshires, Dollar Tree, Valpak coupons, and schools via packets sent home to students. Posters should reference STAR Transit’s social media pages. Another participant mentioned that direct mail would be the best way for STAR Transit to market their transit services.
What about coordination between agencies is the biggest barrier for you?
50% of respondents indicated that developing agreements between agencies is the biggest barrier to coordination, while 25% indicated that identifying appropriate contacts was the biggest barrier. Related to developing agreements, some agencies have a fear that they'll overcommit their existing resources. There’s also uncertainty concerning creating the right balance between potential partners. Lack of communication can be a barrier to both developing agreements and identifying contacts. An additional barrier to getting started or identifying new contacts can be new agency staff. Typically, they haven’t yet developed the necessary connections and relationships to facilitate agency coordination.

What is the best way to enhance the user’s experience?
68% of attendees voted for better information on how to use transit, while 16% voted for personal instruction on the phone or in person. More information is needed on how to utilize STAR Transit’s services including: clarification on how far in advance to call and schedule a ride and if there are different requirements for different types of trip (medical vs. work). A rider noted that she has not been picked up before for her return trip home from school. Another rider mentioned that a driver has parked across the street when picking her up. Increased communication between the provider and rider about how to schedule rides and pick-ups for their needs can help enhance the user’s experience. Additionally, drivers should be properly trained on how to secure wheelchairs.

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?
38% of attendees believed that web or smartphone apps with information on multiple providers is most likely to help improve transportation options. Conversely, another 19% of attendees indicated 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. Websites and smartphone apps are another way to get the info out about available transportation services. A participant noted that transit agencies should keep the end user in mind and consider if they’ll be able to access the technology. Great customer service, people and face-to-face interaction, can be the bridge between technology and the end user.

A participant mentioned that transportation network companies (TNCs, like Uber and Lyft) give the rider more spontaneity when traveling. A partnership with local TNC drivers could increase STAR Transit’s capacity to better match the demand by transporting ambulatory riders. However, there are some questions that remain regarding affordability and accessibility with this service. Another attendee mentioned that Terrell needs a local circulator like Kaufman.

An agency asked if it was possible to track refusals and negotiated trips in order to identify excess demand. STAR Transit answered that only recently, due to an upgraded scheduling system, have they been able to track refusals. An attendee noted that driverless cars would enable individuals with limited mobility to get around on their own
schedules. Additionally, driverless vehicles could be a future solution to increase transit providers’ available capacity.

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 Kaufman County.

Participants ranked priorities in the following order:
1. Improve access to local employment destinations in areas such as Kaufman, Terrell, and Forney, focusing on options for low-income workers.
2. Improve public awareness of existing and new public transportation services.
3. Increase options for local transportation within and between communities in Kaufman County for those with limited mobility, including older adults, individuals with disabilities, and low-income individuals.
4. Explore opportunities for regional connections that can address needs for commuter services connecting to major employment destinations in the region and needs for affordable and accessible transportation to medical services in the region, including Mesquite and Dallas.
5. Maintain and improve transportation options for older adults throughout the county, including rural northeast and southern parts of the county.
6. Increase usage or modify service to address low ridership on STAR Transit’s Trolley in Kaufman.
7. Improve the availability and affordability of transportation to VA services in Dallas.

e. Next Steps
A point-person committee for Kaufman County 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.

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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
Advocate: Emma Pessognelli, Jamie Moore
City of Terrell: Mike Sims, Glenn Caldwell
Kaufman Economic Development Corporation: Lee Ayres
Kaufman Herald: Phil Major
Kaufman County: Judge Bruce Wood, Commissioner Mike Hunt, Aaron Conway
Lakes Regional MHMR Center: Wendy Roberts, Laura Vaughn, Sarah McManaway, LaZendra Rhodes, Laurie White
North Central Texas Council of Governments: Sarah Chadderdon, Kelli Schlicher, Edgar Hernandez, Jing Xu
Senior Connect: Melinda Polk
STAR Transit: Mike Sims, Tommy Henricks, Kim Britton, Teresa Elliot
Terrell Chamber of Commerce: Carlton Tidwell
Terrell Economic Development Corporation: Danny Booth
Terrell ISD: Freddie Pierce
TSH-SDHS: Michael Verseckes
Workforce Solutions of North Central Texas: Katherine Ware, Laura Dodson, Debbie Brerner
Prioritization Process

NCTCOG staff contacted stakeholders in Kaufman County to follow up on the outcomes of the outreach meeting that took place on Monday, March 13, 2017 in Terrell. The following individuals, representing a variety of interests in Kaufman County, participated in the prioritization of strategies to address the needs identified.

Omega Hawkins, Executive Director, STAR Transit
Katherine Ware, Center Manager, Terrell Workforce Center
Wendy Roberts, Lead Care Coordinator, Lakes Regional MHMR
Glenn Caldwell, Director of Public Services, City of Terrell
Melinda Polk, Director of Development, Senior Connect
Robert Hunter, Veterans Service Officer, Kaufman County
Laura Henry-Pugh, Executive Director, United Way of Kaufman County
Danny Booth, President, Terrell Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Corporation
Kelli Schlicher, Transportation Planner, North Central Texas Council of Governments

This document summarizes conversations during the prioritization process.

Omega Hawkins, Executive Director of STAR Transit, noted that they are working to develop a Terrell circulator as well as a commuter route between Kaufman and Terrell. Once in operation, these routes will provide local trips to work and free up some capacity on their demand response service. Omega also mentioned that the ridership on the Kaufman Trolley has boomed. STAR Transit staff is currently trying to determine what caused this jump in ridership.

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