APPENDIX C.12

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

Kelli Schlicher, AICP

Texas A&M University – Commerce at Rockwall
Rockwall, Texas
March 21, 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 37%
2. Transportation provider 16%
3. Healthcare provider 0%
4. Non-profit 21%
5. Social service organization 11%
6. Community advocate / community member 11%
7. Other 11%
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
- Rockwall County, Mar. 2017
- County-by-County Outreach Meetings, Fall 2016 – Summer 2017
- Final Plan Document, Fall 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
Rockwall 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]

1. Medical: 36%
2. Work: 29%
3. Nutritional / Grocery store: 21%
4. Social: 0%
5. Other: 14%
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>Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Targeted marketing to local agencies</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public marketing campaign</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A centralized location to receive information about transit</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials provided in another language</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0%</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
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

[Bar chart showing the percentage of responses for each option]

Access North Texas
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 Rockwall County Priorities

## Top Priorities

1) Improve public awareness of available transit services

2) Increase transportation options

3) Identify, plan for and provide transit to regional employment opportunities

## Additional Priorities

Explore need for transit to local employment clusters

Improve condition and availability of sidewalks and crosswalks in order to facilitate easy access to transit

Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need
Please Return Your Keypad!

Thank you
Questions or Comments

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

With the agency you work for, what is the highest day-to-day transportation need?
36% of respondents indicated that the highest day-to-day transportation need for their agency is medical trips, while 29% specified that work trips are their highest transportation need. A participant noted that there is an intensive daily transportation need to mental illness clinics, as well as a need to visit doctors in Rockwall. A rider mentioned that getting transportation to medical appointments improves their quality of life. An attendee mentioned that low-income individuals are relying on friends and neighbors to get rides to their destinations, but this is not always a consistent way to get around. Someone representing the YMCA in Rockwall voiced a concern for older adults who no longer drive, but that need access to the YMCA for exercise and socialization. Lastly, a rider mentioned that grocery shopping was also a need.

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 transportation services, while 22% specified that increasing coordination between agencies was their primary area of concern. A participant explained that increased coordination between agencies is necessary. The challenge is getting Rockwall County residents to Texas Department of Assistive and
Rehabilitative Services (DARS) in Dallas in order to improve skills to return to work. Individuals are instructed to go to Dallas for an initial evaluation, but there’s not a transportation option to get there. Royse City ISD is located in Rockwall County, Hunt County, and Collin County. Rockwall is the closest need for employment opportunities, but the high school is in Hunt County. Better communication between agencies is needed so that students can seek the job opportunities. Increased coordination between STAR Transit and residential facilities to schedule group trips for grocery and doctor trips could increase efficiency.

A participant mentioned that getting to doctor’s appointments and the grocery store are her primary concerns. Another rider noted that STAR Transit enables her travel for her daily needs. Without this transit service, she wouldn’t have a way to get around. An attendee identified that there are some time and day restrictions for scheduling out of county medical trips. This could be tricky for riders if they’re unable to line up their medical appointments on the appropriate day with transportation.

 Regarding enhancing the user’s experience, it would be helpful if a group of riders could schedule a coordinated trip to and from the same location. For example, a group of residents may want to ride together to the grocery store together.

What funding approach will have the biggest impact on improving access to transit?
39% 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 28% answered that focusing on getting additional local government investment in transit would have the biggest impact. STAR Transit is a great example of an agency that utilizes Medicaid, Aging and traditional transportation funding, enabling them to do more with less. Regarding local government investment, a Rockwall County resident mentioned that they have seen impacts on the level of service when the local government decreased the annual funds contributed to STAR Transit. Additionally, if STAR Transit’s level of service is decreased due to less local funding, other transportation options need to be available.

What method could improve the awareness of available services?
56% of respondents indicated that a public marketing campaign is the best method to improve awareness, while 31% answered that targeted marketing to local agencies would be the best method. A participant had a suggestion that marketing materials should be available at highly popular and potentially highly popular locations frequented by riders. Also, a water bill insert could raise awareness about available transit services, particularly for those individuals who do not drive. Another attendee mentioned that targeted marketing to local agencies working with potential clients would be the best avenue because they already have an existing relationship with their clients. Materials provided in another language, namely Spanish, would be helpful for Rockwall County Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) clients.

What about coordination between agencies is the biggest barrier for you?
43% of respondents indicated that identifying the appropriate contacts is the biggest barrier to coordination, while 21% indicated that knowing where to start and developing agreements between agencies were equal barriers to coordination.
Knowing where to start would help the client find information. It is important to identify who is responsible for transportation in Rockwall County. Rockwall County has a small geography, so there’s great potential for collaboration. Cities can participate and contribute through the Rockwall County Road Consortium to express their unique transportation needs.

An attendee identified a concern with potential legislative barriers for cities working with transit agencies. Currently, there aren’t any legislative barriers to coordinating or working with DART. Typically, the biggest issue is that cities don’t want to commit their sales tax to become a DART member. However, there are other ways to contract with DART or connect to DART without committing sales tax. If there is an additional need within a community for transit services, city officials could reach out to DART or STAR Transit to learn about what’s possible.

What is the best way to enhance the user’s experience?
36% of attendees voted for better information on how to use transit, while 27% voted for personal instruction on the phone or in person. Currently, residents may not know what transportation services are available. Personal instruction over phone or in person was preferred because automated systems can be a barrier for some individuals receiving the information they need.

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?
29% of attendees believed that web or smartphone apps with information on multiple providers is most likely to help improve transportation options. 18% of attendees believed that transportation network companies (TNCs) like Uber and Lyft and driverless cars, buses or shuttles were most likely to help improve transportation options. Conversely, another 18% 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. Regarding web and smartphone apps, more older adults are utilizing this technology each day. An attendee noted that females may not be as comfortable utilizing TNCs, particularly since it’s with someone they’ve never met before in their personal vehicle. Some clients may be intimidated by using public transit with multiple people, multiple stops and a changing environment. For those riders, TNCs could be a good fit because it’s a personal trip to their end destination and it’s potentially less stressful. It’s also important to see what the market’s doing. Ford is looking at the future of transportation and changing how they do business and adapting how driverless cars may be used by transit agencies in the future.

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 Rockwall County.

Participants ranked priorities in the following order:
1. Increase transportation options for seniors, low-income residents, and people with disabilities, including increased daytime, evening, and weekend service to improve access to community destinations.
2. Explore partnerships to increase the affordability of fares for those most in need.
3. Improve public awareness of existing and new public transportation services.
4. Identify, plan for and provide transportation options for access to regional employment opportunities.
5. Improve condition and availability of sidewalks and crosswalks in order to facilitate access to transit.
6. Explore needs for transportation service to identified employment clusters within Rockwall County.

e. Next Steps

A point-person committee for Rockwall 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: Willie Strange, Pricilla Anderson, Buz Ecson, Judi Johnson, Bennie Moore, Emily Shrum, Rustie Petty
City of Fate: Justin Weiss
City of Rockwall: Joey Boyd
Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART): Kendra Bullard
Evergreen Congregate Center: Tonya Carpenter
J.E.R Chilton YMCA at Rockwall: Marilyn King
Lakes Regional Community: Kindell Weatherford
North Central Texas Council of Governments: Sarah Chadderdon, Kelli Schlicher, Edgar Hernandez, Chris Reed, Jesse Brown
Rockwall Area Chamber of Commerce: Dana Macalik
Rockwall County Indigent Health: Donna Mussotter
Rockwall Housing: Tony Rios
Rockwall Women, Infants, and Children (WIC): Maggie Lozano
Royce City ISD: Dorcas Schale, Debi Wood
STAR Transit: Omega Hawkins, Tommy Henricks, Kim Britton
Texas Department of Transportation: Sunil John
Prioritization Process

NCTCOG staff contacted stakeholders in Rockwall County to follow up on the outcomes of the outreach meeting that took place on Tuesday, March 21, 2016 in Rockwall. The following individuals, representing a variety of interests in Rockwall County, participated in the prioritization of strategies to address the needs identified.

Omega Hawkins, Executive Director, STAR Transit
Linda Flannery, Veterans Service Officer, Veterans Services Office
Melanie Gann, Center Director, Lakes Regional Community Center
Melinda Polk, Director of Development, Senior Connect
Justin Weiss, Assistant City Manager, City of Fate
Katherine Ware, Center Manager, Terrell Workforce Center
Dana Macalik, President, Rockwall Chamber of Commerce
Kindell Weatherford, Lakes Regional Community Center
Tony Rios, Director, Rockwall Housing Authority
Kelli Schlicher, Transportation Planner, North Central Texas Council of Governments

This document summarizes conversations during the prioritization process.

Linda Flannery, Veterans Service Officer for Rockwall County noted that her veterans’ transit needs include medical and counseling appointments in Dallas, the VA clinics in Dallas, Greenville, and Bonham, as well as local trips. Veterans who do not qualify for the VA’s transportation have to find other ways to reach their appointments.

STAR Transit is the public transportation provider in Rockwall County. Their Executive Director, Omega Hawkins, explained that veteran’s trips to medical and counseling appointments in Dallas, as well as the Dallas VA could be provided by STAR Transit. For riders who may need additional assistance for medical trips, STAR Transit’s free Client Advocate program could provide a local volunteer to travel with the rider to their appointment, wait for the appointment to be complete, and ride home with them. Should a rider need assistance on other types of trips, a personal attendant may ride with them for free. Omega expressed that STAR Transit is interested in exploring a partnership with The Connection in Hunt County in order to connect riders to Greenville.

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