

**Access North Texas
Kick-off Meeting
August 19, 2016
Fort Worth Intermodal Transportation Center**

1. Meeting Summary.....	p.1
a. Welcome.....	p.1
b. Introduction to Access North Texas.....	p.1
c. Interactive Questions & Discussion.....	p.1
d. Next Steps.....	p.3
2. Attendee List.....	p.3

1. Meeting Summary

a. Welcome

Kelli Schlicher from the North Central Texas Council of Governments welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the Access North Texas Kick-off meeting and introduced Michael Morris, Transportation Director from the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). Mr. Morris led by introducing NCTCOG, its purpose, and responsibility to the region as the lead agency for transit coordination activities. Mr. Morris also went through the history of transit coordination and highlighted Access North Texas as a federal requirement. Mr. Morris emphasized the importance of public transportation for individuals accessing their communities.

b. Introduction to Access North Texas

Ms. Schlicher provided a [short presentation](#) and covered the following material:

- What Access North Texas is and is not
- A summary of the 2013 Access North Texas Plan and four examples of projects successfully implemented since the adoption of this plan
- The general timeline and upcoming meetings of the outreach process

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 the region. The polling questions and discussion are summarized below.

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

53% of the respondents indicated that the highest day-to-day transportation need for their agency is medical trips, while 33% specified that work related trips is their highest transportation need. Although transportation for health and work related matters ranked highest in the audience poll, the need to provide transportation for social connections and events was also discussed, especially in regards to reducing social isolation. Day habilitation, education, childcare, and other day-to-day services were other unmet needs that many attendees identified.

Which technology advances are most likely to help improve transportation options for seniors and individuals with disabilities in the next five years?

34% of attendees voted ride-hail apps, such as Uber and Lyft, as the most likely to improve transportation options, with a central location for information on multiple providers coming in at 25%. Attendees also discussed the need for training and education on any type of technology with an understanding that individuals would have varying levels of ability with the use of such technology. The lack of wheelchair accessible vehicles in services such as Uber and Lyft was an issue that needed to be addressed before it becomes a solution for everyone.

Which technology advances are most likely to help improve transportation options for low-income individuals in the next five years?

28% of the respondents indicated that web or smartphone apps with information on multiple providers would be most likely to help improve transportation options for low-income individuals in the next five years, followed by 21% of attendees who voted for transportation network companies like Uber and Lyft. However, 22% of the respondents agreed that most low-income individuals are unlikely to benefit from any of the options mentioned. The cost of monthly phone bills along with the cost of requesting a vehicle from ride hailing apps were identified as a barrier for many low-income individuals. Additionally, the required use of a credit card is an impediment for the widespread use of transportation network companies by this population.

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

41% of attendees answered that a focus on integrating funding from multiple programs would have the biggest impact on improving access to transit, while 32% answered that a focus on getting additional local government investment in transit would have the biggest impact. Discussion centered around a need for local governments to invest more funds on increasing transportation options to vulnerable populations and bringing awareness of this need to individuals of influence, such as council members and mayors. Increasing the local match for federal funds was also discussed as a necessary component to stretch federal funding as federal funding is limited with the expectation that it be matched with local funding. Discussions also led to an alternative way of stretching federal funding by integrating or eliminating duplicative services. This would allow for greater federal funding availability for projects that would fill service gaps in the region. Respondents highlighted the need for a central location where they can obtain information on the activities of different organizations, that way service wouldn't be duplicated and service gaps would be easier to identify.

What is the best way to enhance the user's experience?

26% of attendees voted for better information on how to use transit, while 25% voted for personal instruction on the phone or in person as the best way to enhance the user's experience. Discussion centered on second-hand accounts of riders' experiences and the daunting task of not only trying to figure out how to get on a bus but also the various connections they may have to take to get to a doctor's appointment several cities away. Streamlining connections was identified as a way to enhance a user's experience along with driver sensitivity of the individual's needs. Some agencies have seen successes with

agency-wide training (including customer service training for drivers) on how to assist individuals with similar difficulties. This would allow riders to feel at ease and would potentially increase ridership for the agency. This method was identified as a win-win situation for both the transit agency and riders.

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

60% of attendees agreed that developing agreements between agencies is the biggest barrier for coordination, while 16% identified that not knowing where to start as their biggest barrier. Respondents discussed the need for effective coordination in order to avoid the duplication of existing services. One potential solution for increasing coordination between agencies is working with the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in Fort Worth to match up services for veterans and their families (including transit). Another opportunity to coordinate is creating continuity of passes/fares between transit agencies within the region. Determining the appropriate contacts in other agencies was also identified as a barrier. Keeping centralized resources up-to-date could help with identifying appropriate agency contacts. Lastly, creating a consensus amongst agencies on one set of rules for required reports, and consistency in rules for expending federal funds were both seen as a need.

d. Next Steps

In closing, Ms. Schlicher urged everyone to assist in updating the plan by contacting her with documentation on the challenges, successes, and ways to improve transportation options in their respective areas. A point-person committee will soon be developed. Agencies or individuals interested in participating should contact Ms. Schlicher. County-by-county outreach meetings are planned from Fall 2016 through Summer 2017 with details on the outreach meetings coming soon. 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

AARP Texas - Dallas/Fort Worth: Melodia Gutierrez
Ambassadors for Aging Well: Elva Roy, Peggy Masters
American Foundation for the Blind: Neva Fairchild
Catholic Charities Diocese of Fort Worth: Naaman Akinola
City and Rural Rides: Michael Kelly, Rhonda Kelton
City of Arlington: Alicia Winkelblech
City of Bedford: Kevin Overstreet
City of Burleson: Laura Melton, P.E.
City of Duncanville: Kevin Hugman
City of Fort Worth: Council Member Ann Zadeh
City of Grand Prairie: Anthony Flowers, Monica Law
Community Council of Greater Dallas: Brittney Tree

Community Transit Services: Daniel Edwards, Sr.
Dallas Area Rapid Transit: Todd Plesko, Tammy Haenftling, Kendra Bullard, Fred Pratt
Dallas County: Micah Baker, Minesha Reese
Denton County Transportation Authority: Jonah Katz, Anne MacCraken, Crystal Collins
Easter Seals North Texas: Courtney Cartwright
Fort Worth Transportation Authority: Carla Forman, Curvie Hawkins, Lorenzo Chess, Korbin Figg
Kaufman County Senior Citizens' Services: Melinda Polk
MHMR of Tarrant County: Shiela Holbrook-White
Naval Air Station Fort Worth, Joint Reserve Base: Mike Branum
North Central Texas Area Agency on Aging: Doni Green, Mike Hensley
North Central Texas Council of Governments: Michael Morris, Sarah Chadderdon, Kelli Schlicher, Donato Perez, Edgar Hernandez
North Texas Tollway Authority: Lori Shelton
Office of Commissioner Andy H. Nguyen: Mary Gilman
Parkland Center for Clinical Innovation: Stephanie Fenniri
Parkland Health & Hospital System: Brad Walsh
Pecan Valley Centers for Behavioral & Developmental Health Care: Vincent Osborne
Public Transit Services: Terry Roberson
REACH of Dallas: Harvey Spears
Senior Center Resources & Public Transit: Danny Allembaugh, Vicki Goodson, Diane Mason, Arnie Padilla
Senior Citizen Services: Jerry Mosman, Marcus Rockwell
Span, Inc: Max Calder
STAR Transit: Omega Hawkins, Mike Sims
Tarrant County: Russell Schaffner
Texas Health Arlington Memorial Hospital: Mina Kini, Catherine McMains
Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Denton: Dr. Laurie Long
United Way of Tarrant County: Don Smith, Cynthia Jensen
University of Texas-Arlington: Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad, Dr. Gail Adorno, Myriam Igoufe
Wise County Committee on Aging: Amy Pegues