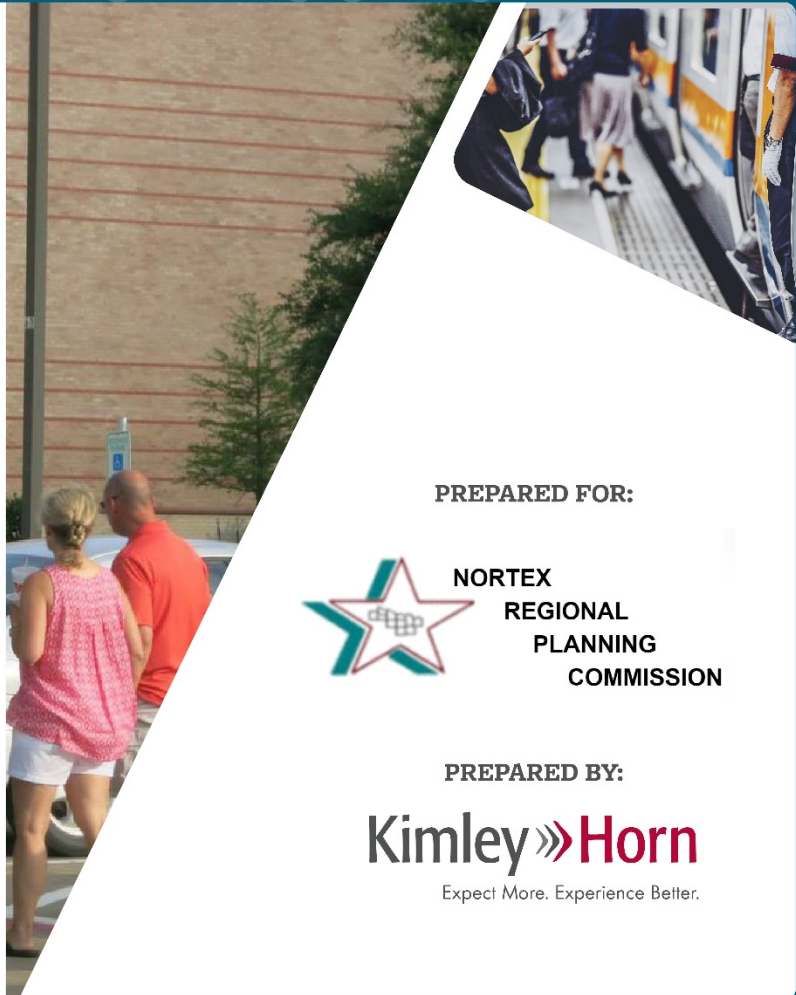




REPORT FOR

# REGIONALLY COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN



PREPARED FOR:



NORTEX  
REGIONAL  
PLANNING  
COMMISSION

PREPARED BY:

**Kimley»Horn**  
Expect More. Experience Better.

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## Executive Summary

The Nortex Regionally Coordinated Transportation Planning Committee serves an area that encompasses 9,461 square miles, which is larger than seven states, and has a targeted population of 221,340 individuals. The service area is composed of 11 Counties which include Cottle, Hardeman, Foard, Wilbarger, Baylor, Wichita, Archer, Young, Clay, Jack, and Montague. The area covers thirty Cities and numerous Special Districts in a geographic region commonly referred to as Cross Timbers and Rolling Plains.

The Nortex Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) led efforts to create the North Texas Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan (RCTP) in 2017, which included strategies to eliminate waste and inefficiencies, increase levels of service, reduce air pollution, and ensure maximum coverage of service areas within the region. This report serves as an update to the RCTP—building upon the preexisting challenges and needs, while improving transportation services in the region, and furthering planning efforts, participation, creativity and innovation.

Current transportation services within the Nortex region are spread across four service providers, including Falls Ride, TAPS, Rolling Plains Management SHARP Lines, and Trans Star Ambulance. General needs for the Nortex region were identified through detailed surveys with each provider. Information pertaining to the fleet characteristics for each operator and transportation costs were also determined.

After determining and assessing the needs from the providers, a survey was created and distributed to the health and human service agencies in the study area as well as to the general public. Eight health and human service organizations and over 100 general public members responded to the survey. This information was vital to understand their view on the transit system, needs and gaps, as well as solutions to improve the transportation service. This was supplemented with geographic and demographic data studies to identify needs among the Nortex region.

It was determined there is a basic need for improvement to facilities and vehicles, along with drivers with proper qualifications. A communication gap between some agencies and the providers was also recognized. There were potential strategies identified to address these needs, including setting up recurring meetings not just amongst providers but also with health and human service agencies, creating ridership guides, identifying tools to ease user request of services. Most of these solutions require funding; this report identifies federal and state grants, and other avenues to request or apply for funding. Goals, objectives, and targets were also defined to better address, measure, and implement transit needs within the Nortex region.



# 1. Introduction

The Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan (RCTP) is a planning report required by Texas DOT (TxDOT) to be updated every five years. This RCTP will be for the period of January 2022 through December 2026 to ensure people are able to get where they need to go effectively. This document includes eight sections including this introduction section.

- Section 1: Introduction
- Section 2: Transportation Resources in the Region includes information regarding the transportation providers in the region and all agencies responsible for transportation planning in the region
- Section 3: Comprehensive Assessment of the Public's Unmet Transportation Needs, Assessment of Overlaps & Gaps in the Delivery of Transportation Services & Gaps Analysis includes a comprehensive assessment of the region's unmet needs and inefficiencies; this involves a geographic and demographic analysis as well as a list of all health and human services agencies and programs
- Section 4: Planning for Comprehensive Services includes a description of how this plan integrates services of other programs
- Section 5: Integrated Planning Processes includes a description of how this plan integrates with other metropolitan, rural, and statewide transportation plans
- Section 6: Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives includes a description on each of those items and how they will be met
- Section 7: Sustain Planning and Implement Plan includes a description of the planning region's capacity to sustain regional transportation planning activities
- Section 8: Performance Measures to Evaluate Effectiveness includes a description of locally determined metrics for the transportation services and how the agency will collect, maintain and assess this information

## 2. Transportation Resources in the Region

The Nortex Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) covers 11 rural counties in north-central Texas with an estimated population of 225,000 people. Compared to other parts of Texas, the Nortex region is very rural and has only a few densely populated areas, which makes providing transportation services a challenge. The area is currently served by multiple transportation providers, including those offering public fixed routes as well as demand-response services. There are also providers offering services through private, non-profit, community-based organizations, health and human services agencies, work force agencies, among others.

This section summarizes the existing transportation service providers in the Nortex region, the services they provide, and their customers to provide a comprehensive understanding of the situation within the region.

### Methodology

To understand the existing transportation services provided in Nortex, Kimley-Horn, in coordination with NRPC, surveyed the current transportation providers in the Nortex region in March of 2021. NRPC provided Kimley-Horn with the previous 2017 RCTP update, which included previous inventories and survey responses. All major transportation providers in the NRPC study area provided feedback.

Through Kimley-Horn's research and NRPC's direction, four transportation providers were identified and received a detailed electronic stakeholder survey. The survey asked questions about the providers, the customers who utilize the services, where the service is provided, how the service is operated, the vehicle fleet, coordination opportunities between the provider and NRPC, and funding opportunities. A copy of the full survey is provided in **Appendix A** and responses are provided in **Appendix B**.

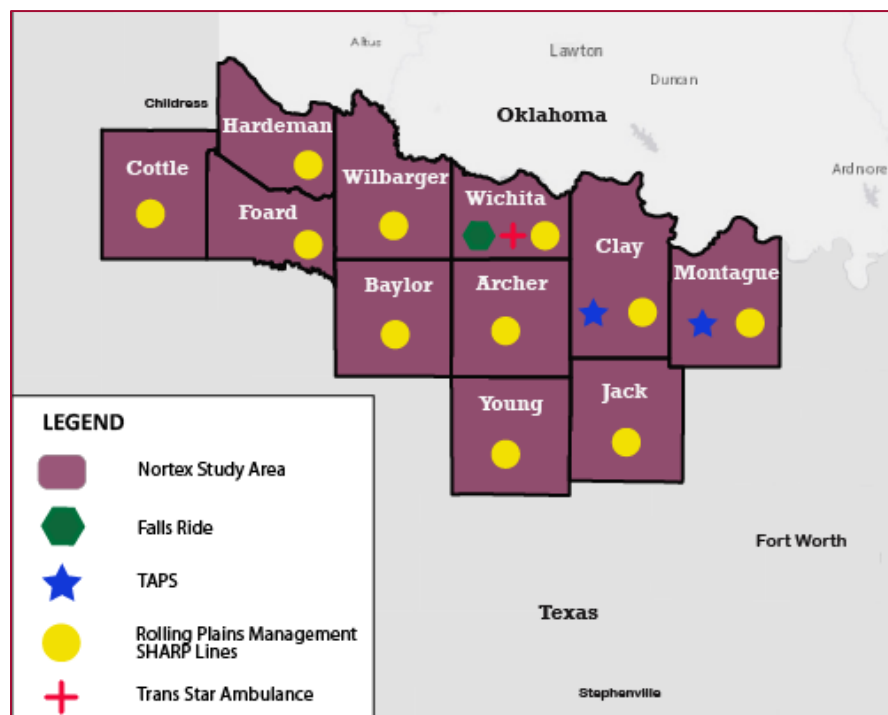
## Transportation Providers in Nortex

The Nortex region is served by four main transportation service providers: Fall Rides, Rolling Plains Management SHARP Lines, TAPS, and Trans Star Ambulance. The following section provides a holistic summary of the transportation services available in the Nortex region, a profile on each of the providers, and key findings from the survey.

### Nortex Transportation Resources Overview

The providers together service all 11 counties in the Nortex region, as shown in **Figure 1**. Falls Ride and Trans Star Ambulance both only serve Wichita County, TAPS serves Clay and Montague counties, and SHARP Lines serves all counties, with the exception of strictly medical transportation in Clay and Montague.

*Figure 1 – Transportation Service Providers for the General Public in Nortex*



Together, the transportation providers serve all priority populations, including individuals with disabilities, age 65 and older, low-income, limited English proficiency, children, students, veterans, and the general public. The percentage of priority populations served by each provider is summarized in Table 2. These individuals use the transportation services to travel to a variety of places, from work and education to medical appointments, congregate meals, and recreational activities.

Table 1 – Priority Populations Served

Priority Population	Falls Ride	TAPS	SHARP Lines	Trans Star Ambulance
<b>Individuals with Disabilities</b>	10%	38%	99%	-
<b>Individuals Age 65 and Older</b>	15%	45%	28%	-
<b>Low-Income Individuals</b>	10%	-	25%	-
<b>Individuals with Limited English Proficiency</b>	4%	1%	-	-
<b>Children/Students</b>	10%	-	-	-
<b>Veterans</b>	1%	5%	6%	-
<b>General Public</b>	50%	11%	12%	-

Source: March 2021 Nortex Providers Survey, SHARP Lines provided supplemental information after the survey

The fleets for the operators are comprised of vans, minibuses, standard buses, and specialty vehicles. These vehicles are typically equipped with wheelchair tie-downs or can be requested if needed. More information pertaining to each operator's fleet composition is provided in Table 2. A comprehensive fleet inventory list for each operator can be found in **Appendix C**.

Table 2 – Fleet Composition

Vehicle Types	Falls Ride	TAPS	SHARP Lines	Trans Star Ambulance
<b>Sedans</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	-
<b>Vans</b>	<b>X</b>	✓* 10 retiring 12 purchases	✓* 5 retiring 20 purchases	-
<b>Minibuses</b>	<b>X</b>	✓* 26 retiring 28 purchases	✓* 20 retiring 10 purchases	-
<b>Standard buses</b>	✓* 8 retiring 8 purchases	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	-
<b>Coaches</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	-
<b>Articulated buses</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	-
<b>Specialty vehicles</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	✓	-

Source: March 2021 Nortex Providers Survey

Note: \* indicates that the vehicles are equipped with wheelchair tie-downs or other options for individuals with disabilities.



The survey also asked about other constraints and challenges faced by operators and their riders. Responses included funding constraints (which include rules prohibiting service to non-core clients) and being unfamiliar with coordination opportunities. A summary of their operations and capital costs is included in Table 3.

*Table 3 – Transportation Cost*

Cost Category	Falls Ride	TAPS	SHARP Lines	Trans Star Ambulance
Total Annual Transportation Costs	-	\$2,300,000	\$2,452,870	-
Percent of cost on Operations	70%	60%	92%	-
Percent of cost on Maintenance	20%	23%	7%	-
Percent of cost on Administration	10%	18%	8%	-
Percent of revenue for operating costs from federal sources	80%	54%	36%	-
Percent of revenue for operating costs from state sources	10%	33%	17%	-
Percent of revenue for operating costs from local government	5%	11%	0%	-
Percent of revenue for operating costs from fares	5%	2%	1%	-
Percent of revenue for capital costs from federal sources	100%	6%	80%	-
Percent of revenue for capital costs from state sources	-	94%	-	-

*Source: March 2021 Nortex Providers Survey, SHARP Lines provided supplemental information after the survey*

Another challenge being faced is that reservations typically need to be made one day in advance of the trip and for some providers, two to three days in advance. These reservations can typically only be made by calling the provider directly or in some instances through email. There was no indication that there is any online tool to help make these reservations.

These constraints and issues indicate that there may be opportunities for improvements in coordination, marketing, and other efforts. A comprehensive summary of the qualitative and quantitative survey results can be found in **Appendix D**.

### Falls Ride

Falls Ride is the public transportation system operated by the City of Wichita Falls. The system offers seven, geographically distributed routes through the City. The operating schedule for Falls Ride is shown below:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
5 a.m. – 7 p.m.					10 a.m. – 5 p.m.	No Service*

\*Falls Ride does not operate most routes, with the exception of Sheppard Express (Route 6) on Sundays.

Falls Ride offers the following fare structure:

Adults/Full	\$1.50
Elderly (ages 65+)	\$0.75
Disabled	\$0.75
Student/Youth	\$0.75
Children (ages 4 and under)	Free
Medicare card	\$0.75
Deviations	\$3.00/trip
Sheppard Express	\$2.00

All fares include a free transfer if the destination requires use of more than one route. In addition to the fare structure outlined above, Falls Ride offers passes with up to 20 rides. Another option for those who utilize public transit more regularly is the 30-day pass. Both options provide a discount over traditional fares.

Falls Ride, in addition to providing traditional fixed-route service, offers route deviations or a demand-response system for passengers who may not be able to get to a regular bus stop. Under this system, buses can deviate up to 0.75 miles from the regular route to pick-up and drop-off passengers. This service results in a higher fare and can be found in the fare structure above.

Falls Ride also offers other transit services such as the “Grocery Cart” which allows those 60 years of age and older, or those with disabilities, to be picked-up at their residence and dropped-off at the grocery store where they may shop for up to one hour and then dropped back off at their residence. The other service offered is the “Night Crawler” which allows users to travel to work or home after hours. Both of these services must be reserved ahead of time by calling the transit agency.

Schedules for each route are available in pamphlets, can be found at the agency website, or can be tracked through the DoubleMaps app on smartphones which provide live locations. To provide more convenience for users, every bus is equipped with complementary Wi-Fi.

### SHARP Lines

Rolling Plains Management Corporation (RPMC) operates SHARP Lines Rural Public Transportation for residents of Archer, Baylor, Cottle, Foard, Hardeman, Jack, rural Wichita, Wilbarger, and Young counties. SHARP Lines provides transportation to medical, dental, eye centers and social service

agencies. The service is a demand-response service available to the general population including seniors and people with disabilities. They do not offer any fixed-route service with regular scheduled service at set intervals. The operating schedule for SHARP Lines is shown below:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
8 a.m. – 5 p.m.					No Service	

SHARP Lines follows the following fare structure:


Base Fare	\$2.00
Discounted Fare	\$0.50

The discounted fare includes service for children and students. Reservations for the service must be made at least one day in advance.

### **TAPS**

With service limited to the eastern edge of the Nortex region, Texoma Area Paratransit Systems (TAPS) provides on-demand service in partnership with Transdev to Clay, Cooke, Collin, Fannin, Grayson, Montague, and Wise counties. TAPS' partnership with Transdev was recently renewed for an additional five years. The service is available to all people in the public and since TAPS is an on-demand service, all trips must be scheduled at least 48 hours in advance. The operating schedule for TAPS is shown below. Any special accommodations should be noted when making the reservation in advance.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7 a.m. – 3 p.m.					No Service	



TAPS follows a unique fare structure dependent on the origin and destination:

**Curb-to-curb service - in-town service**

General Public	\$2.00
Students 12+	\$1.00
Disabled or Senior 60+	\$1.00

**Curb-to-curb service - out-of-town service**

General Public	\$3.00
Students 12+	\$1.50
Disabled or Senior 60+	\$1.50

**Curb-to-curb service - out-of-county service**

General Public	\$4.00
Students 12+	\$2.00
Disabled or Senior 60+	\$2.00

All prices are for one-way trips and should be doubled if a round trip is being requested. A valid Medicare card is acceptable to be eligible for a half-fare rate.

***Trans Star Ambulance***

Trans Star Ambulance provides service in Wichita Falls for medical responses. It transports individuals in need of medical attention to local hospitals. There is limited information known about how service is reserved and coordinated.





### 3. Comprehensive Assessment of the Public's Unmet Transportation Needs, Assessment of Overlaps and Gaps in the Delivery of Transportation Services and Gap Analysis

This section summarizes the existing transportation needs in the Nortex region. To conduct this analysis, a geographic data study, a regional demographic analysis, and a health and human services agencies and programs overview was completed. Additionally, a general users and health and human services survey were distributed to better understand needs.

#### Outreach Methodology

In order to understand the existing transportation needs in the Nortex region, Kimley-Horn, in coordination with NRPC, surveyed the general users of transportation services in the Nortex region in May 2021. The transportation providers also supported the outreach effort by providing a link to the online website where the survey was hosted or by providing a printout of the survey so users could complete the survey on paper and submit them to the bus drivers. These completed surveys were then scanned and compiled into one database for analysis.

A survey of the health and human service agencies in the region was also distributed. These surveys were sent directly to the health and human service agencies with a website link where they could complete the survey. The list of agencies was based on the previous 2017 RCTP update list and online research on other health and human service agencies in the Nortex region. The survey was also distributed in May 2021.

After the initial survey distribution, the transportation providers commented that both the users survey and the health and human services survey were too complicated and lengthy for users to complete effectively. To address this issue, Kimley-Horn shortened both surveys and redistributed them through the same channels as defined above. A copy of both the full length and shortened users survey is provided in **Appendix E** and responses are provided in **Appendix F**. A copy of both the full length and shortened health and human services survey is provided in **Appendix G** and responses are provided in **Appendix H**. It should be noted that no new responses were received on the shortened human services survey.

## Needs Assessment

This chapter will detail the Nortex region geographic data, the study area demographics, and the health and human services agencies and programs offered in the Nortex region. The next sections will summarize the results of the users' survey and the health and human services survey. The chapter will conclude with the transportation needs and gaps identified through these efforts.

## Geographic Data

The Nortex region is comprised of 11 counties in north-central Texas. Many of these counties are mainly considered as rural areas, with the exception of Wichita, Wilbarger and Young County. Combined, the Nortex region covers approximately 1,000 square miles of land.

## Regional Description

Nortex counties are located on the border of Oklahoma along the southern edge of the Red River. The counties are comprised within the North Central Plains Region of Texas (see **Figure 2**). More specifically, the Nortex region falls under the West Texas Rolling Plains and Western Cross Timbers. The West Texas Rolling Plains area is largely comprised of existing cattle industry and hosts many of the state's largest ranches. This area ranges in altitudes between 750- and 2,000-feet above sea level and temperature varies widely between seasons. Towards the east, the Western Cross Timbers region includes Clay, Montague, and Jack counties. Within this region, soils are well adapted to fruit and vegetable crops, providing considerable commercial production in some areas.

Figure 2 – Physical Regions of Texas



Source: Texas Almanac

Most of the Nortex population is concentrated in Wichita, Young, Montague, and Wilbarger counties. A large portion of the surrounding counties in Nortex are rural in nature, creating pockets of low population density especially towards the western side of the Nortex region. This low population density relative to the region's size creates challenges for the provision of public transportation in the area.

**Table 4** shows the region's population density by county.

*Table 4 – Population Density by County*

County	Population 2010	Total Area (Square Miles)	Population Density (Persons/Sq Mi.)	Percent Urban
Wichita	131,500	632.9	207.8	89.33%
Montague	19,719	938.3	21.02	41.06%
Young	18,550	930.9	19.93	66.43%
Wilbarger	13,535	978	13.84	78.11%
Jack	9,044	920.1	9.83	46.78%
Archer	9,054	925.6	9.78	11.01%
Clay	10,752	1116.8	9.63	25.40%
Hardeman	4,139	696.9	5.94	0.00%
Baylor	3,726	901.1	4.13	0.00%
Foard	1,336	707.7	1.89	0.00%
Cottle	1,505	901.6	1.67	0.00%

Source: US Census Bureau

### Demographic Data

To better understand the Nortex region and its context, demographic information was pulled from 2019 US Census Bureau data. According to estimates from the US Census Bureau, the overall population of the Nortex region dropped around one percent. This decrease in population is well below the state's 13 percent increase. Among the more urbanized of the Nortex regions, Wichita and Montague have revealed slight growth and higher concentrations of people. This percent change can be seen in

**Table 5** from the counties with the largest growth to those with the greatest decrease.

*Table 5 – Population Change since 2010 by County*

County	Population 2010	Population Estimates July 1, 2019	Percent Change
Montague	19,719	19,818	0.50%
Wichita	131,500	132,230	0.40%
Jack	9,044	8,935	-1.20%
Clay	10,752	10,471	-2.60%
Young	18,550	18,010	-2.90%
Hardeman	4,139	3,933	-5.00%
Archer	9,054	8,553	-5.60%
Wilbarger	13,535	12,769	-5.70%
Baylor	3,726	3,509	-5.80%
Cottle	1,505	1,398	-7.20%
Foard	1,336	1,155	-13.50%

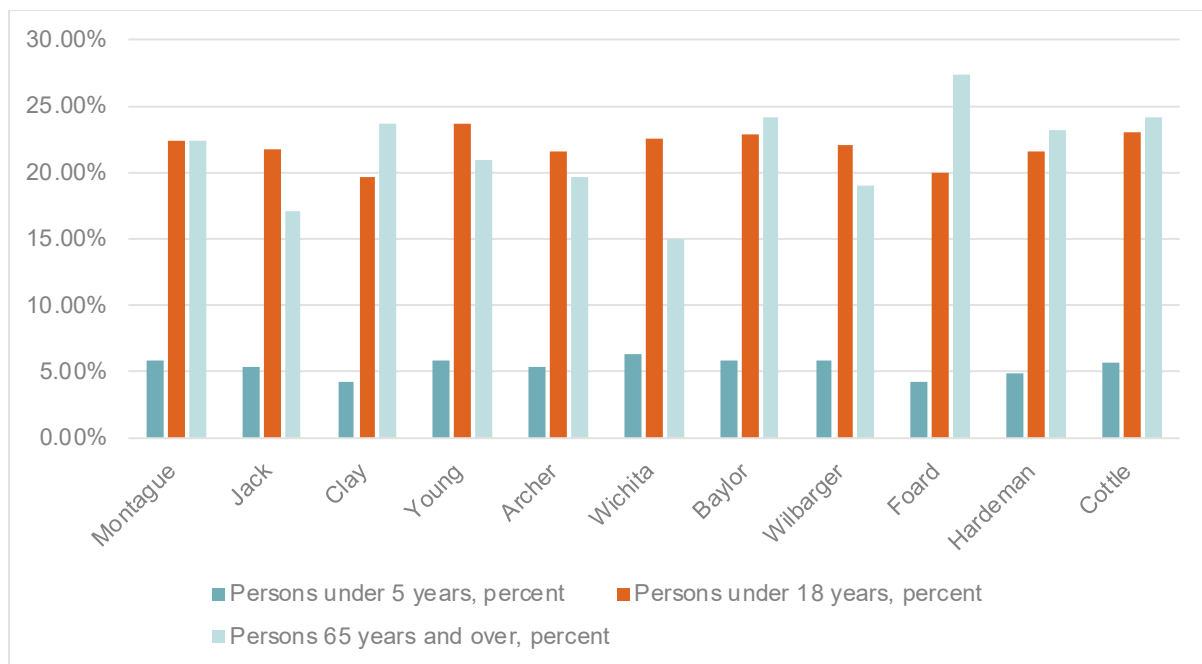
Source: US Census Bureau



## Age

Most areas within the Nortex region contain a high percentage of the population under 18 years and over 65 years. As can be seen in **Figure 3**, Foard, Cottle, Baylor, Clay, Hardeman, and Montague have more than 20 percent of their population over the age of 65. These counties lie on the eastern and western sides of the Nortex region, posing a potential accessibility challenge. With aging populations, physical ability and access to vehicles becomes challenging, further enhancing the need for reliable access to public transportation services. Lower population densities in most of these counties also creates service challenges due to the large distance between passengers and destinations.

Figure 3 – Age by County

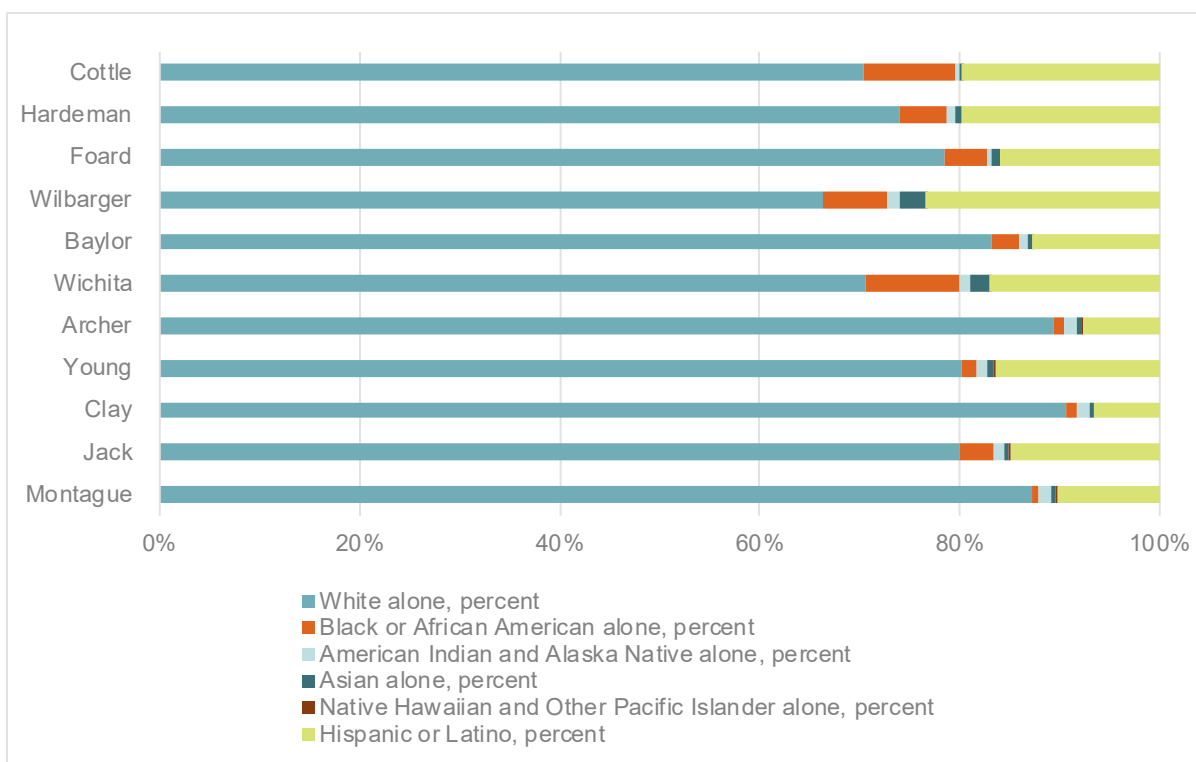


Source: US Census Bureau

## Race and Ethnicity

Within the Nortex region, the population is predominantly white with more than 75 percent white in most Nortex counties. The most diverse counties are Wilbarger, Wichita, and Cottle, which have at least 25 percent minority populations. Considerations and adjustments should be made to accommodate for potential language barriers within transportation services. The race and ethnicity by county are shown in **Figure 4**.

Figure 4 – Race & Ethnicity by County

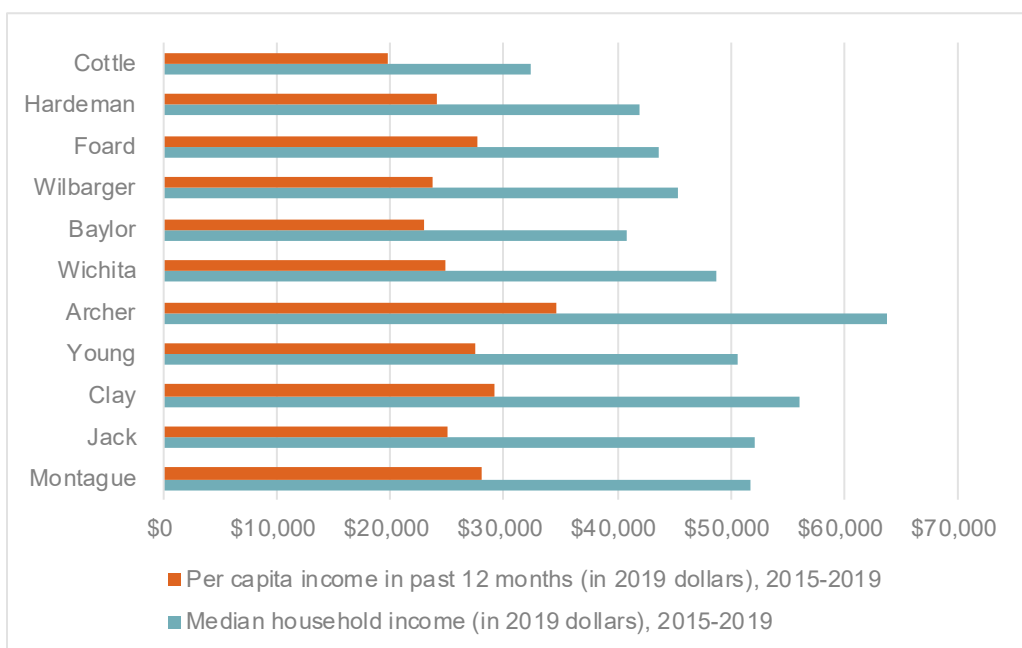


Source: US Census Bureau

## Income

The Nortex region's median household income falls below the state's average, averaging around \$48,000 among the counties and being only around 75 percent of Texas' median income. All the Nortex counties had lower household incomes than Texas' average. However, counties on the eastern edge of Nortex had relatively higher median incomes in comparison to the remaining Nortex region. This breakdown can be found in **Figure 5**.

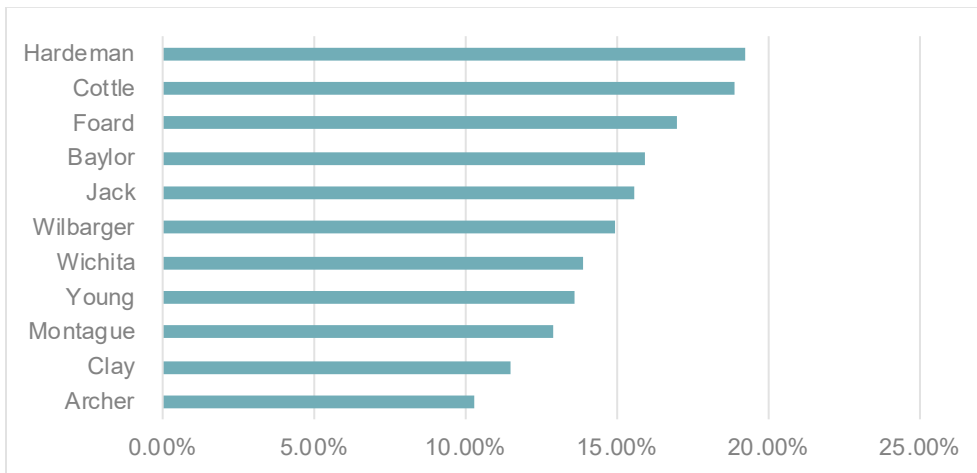
Figure 5 – Median Household Income by County



Source: US Census Bureau

Except for Montague, Clay, and Archer counties, poverty rates are high in Nortex counties in comparison to the state. Remaining counties range around 5 percent above the state's 13.6 percent poverty percentage. The highest poverty rates in Nortex are around 20 percent with most of it concentrated on the western edge, including Cottle, Hardeman, and Foard counties. The poverty rates for each county can be seen in **Figure 6**.

Figure 6 – Percentage of Population in Poverty

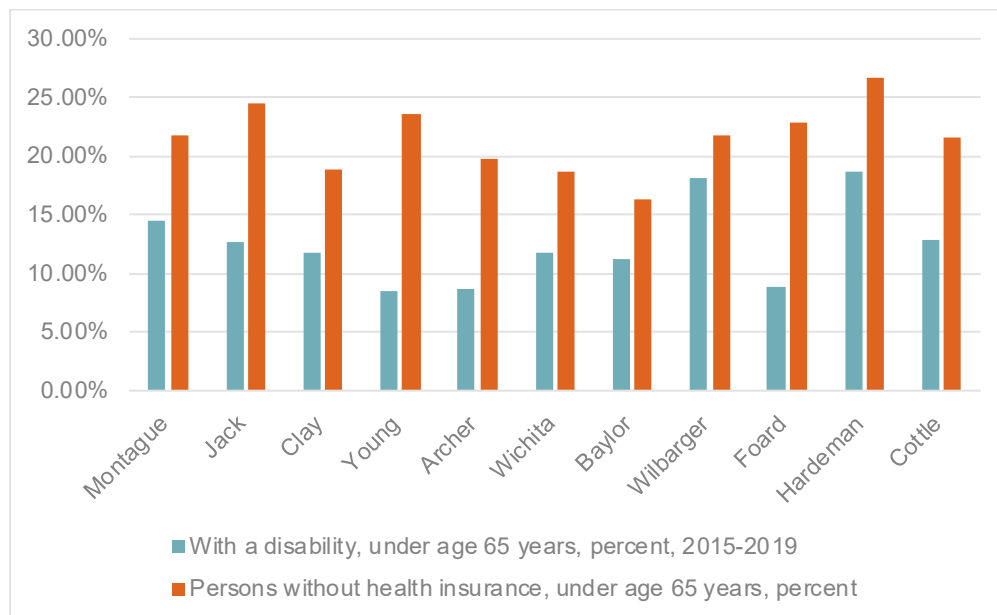


Source: US Census Bureau

### Disabilities

Within Nortex counties, populations with disabilities range between 8 and 19 percent. As can be seen in **Figure 7**, Hardeman, Wilbarger, and Montague have the highest percentage of people with disabilities under the age of 65. Parallel to this, Hardeman also has the highest percentage of people under the age of 65 that do not have health insurance. Access to health and transportation services is integral for such populations that need medical support.

Figure 7 – Disabilities



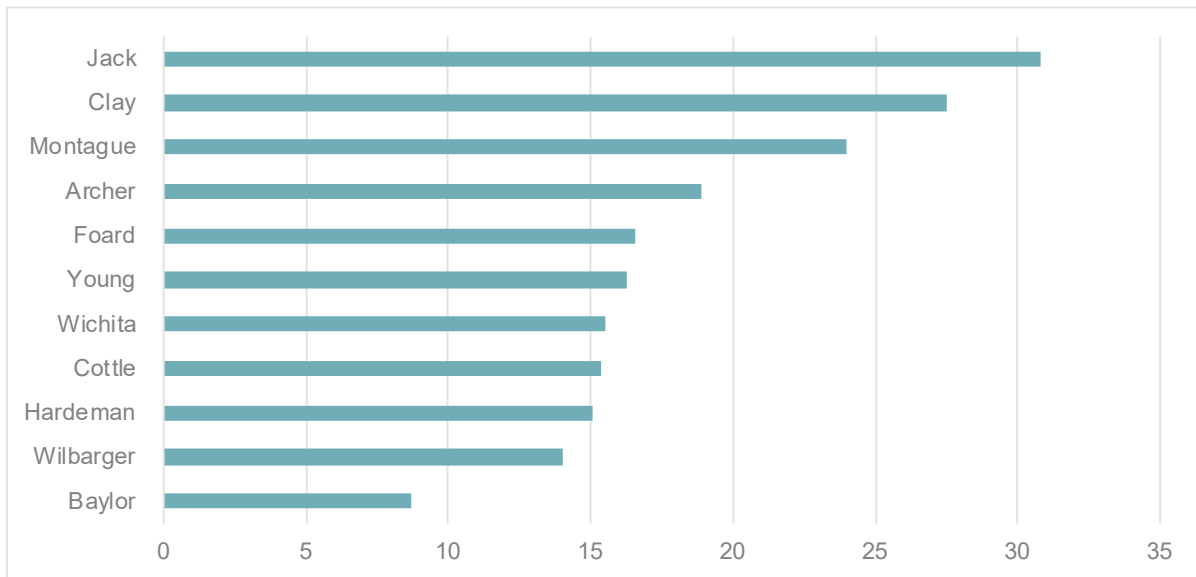
Source: US Census Bureau



## Transportation

According to the US Census Bureau, Nortex counties take an average of 18 minutes to travel to work. Jack, Clay, and Montague counties are on the higher end, ranging between 24 to 31 minutes of travel time. This breakdown can be found in **Figure 8**.

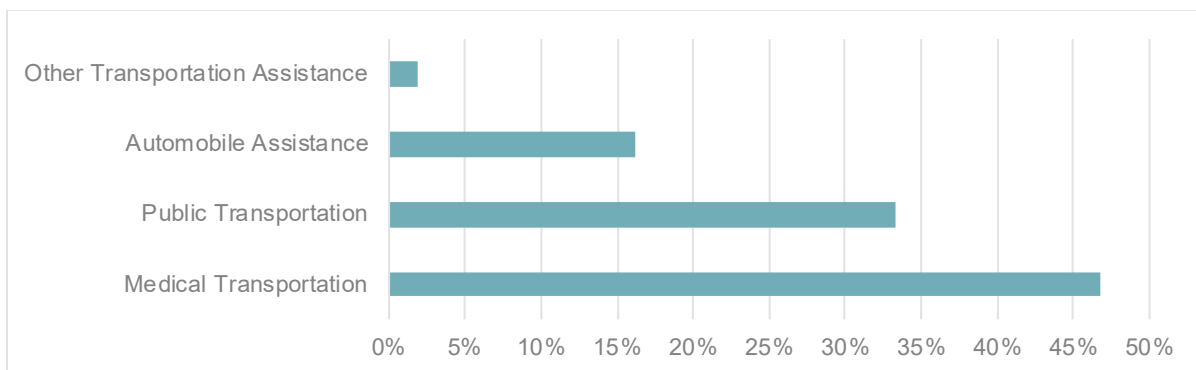
Figure 8 – Average Travel Time to Work (minutes)



Source: US Census Bureau

Data from Texas' 211 Count reveal that medical and public transportation related requests are among the highest assistance requests among the Nortex counties. The types of requests can be seen in **Figure 9**. Medical transportation requests made within the past year were the highest in Wichita County, comprising 58 out of the total 109 calls that were made within the Nortex region. Wichita County also had the highest number of public transportation assistance requests, with 38 out of the total 82 calls that were tracked within Nortex counties. These requests reveal a significant need for transportation services especially as they pertain to public and medical trips.

Figure 9 – Top Transportation Assistance Requests



Source: 211 Count



## Users Survey

A long-form and shortened users survey were distributed to general users of transportation services in the Nortex region in May 2021. The 55 responses garnered from the shortened user survey and the collection of 56 long-form survey responses helped to better understand transportation services in the region. The survey revealed that a majority of respondents are either low-income individuals, 65 years or older, or have some type of disability. Most of the participants rely heavily on public transit as their primary mode of travel, with respondents increasing frequency of use since COVID-19. The main purpose for public transportation usage in the Nortex region is accessing medical facilities and running errands. The need for consistent and reliable access to transportation services is imperative to ensure adequate access for those that have no other means of travel for essential trips.

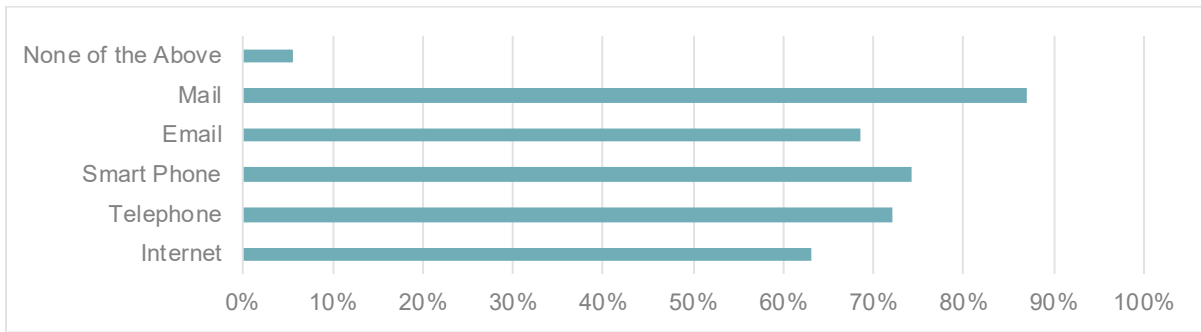
Survey results generally reflected positive feedback towards existing transportation services in the Nortex area. Many users agreed that service is reasonable in cost, is user friendly, and reliable. However, opinions towards service operation were split as there seems to be more room for improvement of service and overall communication of information.

An important note here is that most of the people surveyed are those who already ride transit as that was how the survey was primarily distributed. This may inflate the number of people who find the service reliable, consistent, or working well. Those who may disagree with that view and have these challenges may have already stopped taking transit and instead rely on an alternate source of transportation so the results should be studied with that in mind.

The following figures summarize responses from the users' survey:

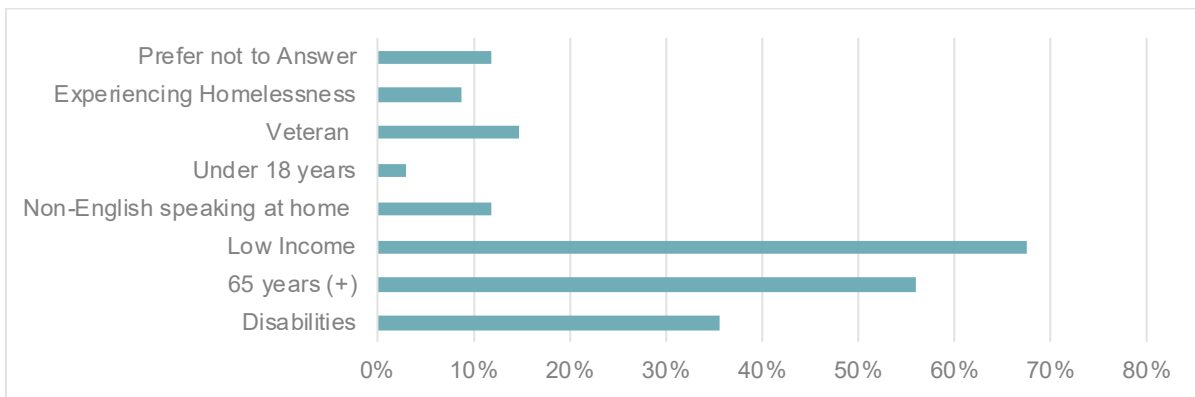
- **Figure 11** – What technologies users have continuous access to?
- **Figure 12** – Which of the following categories best describe the user?
- **Figure 13** – How many vehicles are in households?
- **Figure 14** – What are the most commonly utilized modes of travel?
- **Figure 15** – What are the transportation providers used in the past 5 years?
- **Figure 16** – How many times per week did you use public transportation prior to COVID-19?
- **Figure 17** – How many times per week did you use public transportation since COVID-19?
- **Figure 10** – What types of trips would you use public/alternative transportation services to get to?
- **Figure 19** – Views on public transportation in the area
- **Figure 20** – Changes to improve service in area

Figure 11 – What technologies do you have continuous access to?



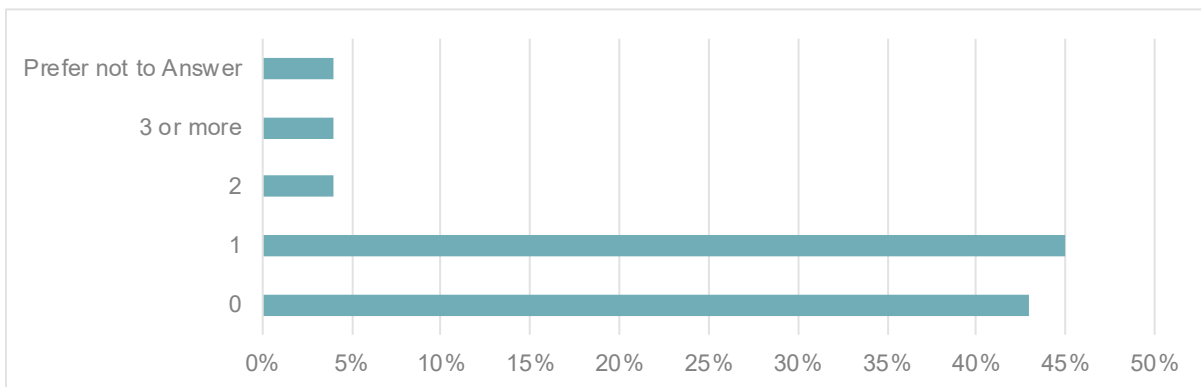
Source: NORTEX User Survey Results

Figure 12 – Do you identify as any of the following?



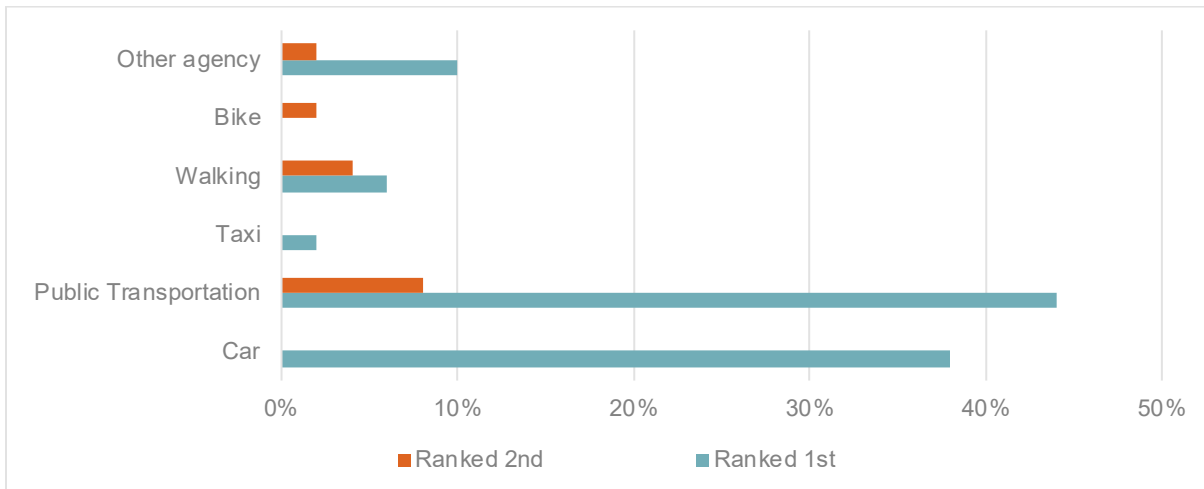
Source: NORTEX User Survey Results

Figure 13 – How many vehicles are in your household?



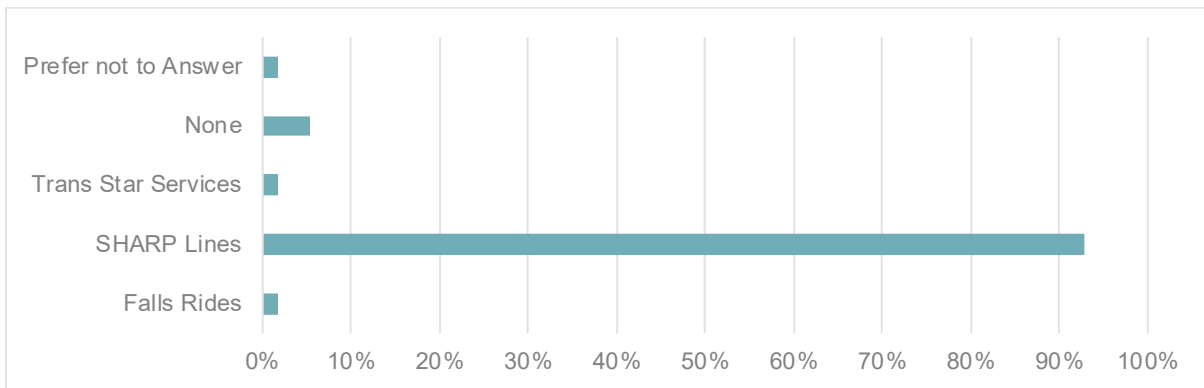
Source: NORTEX User Survey Results

Figure 14 – Rank the modes of travel which you use most from day-to-day



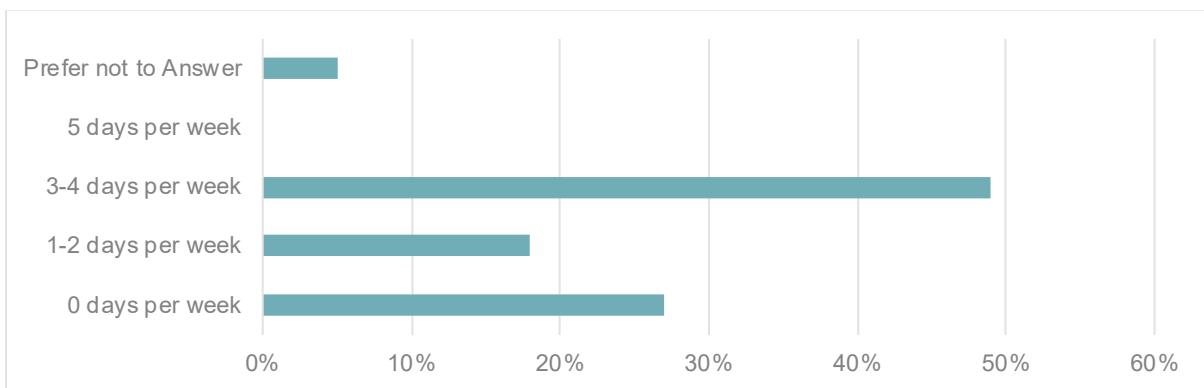
Source: NORTEX User Survey Results

Figure 15 – Which transportation providers have you used in the past 5 years?



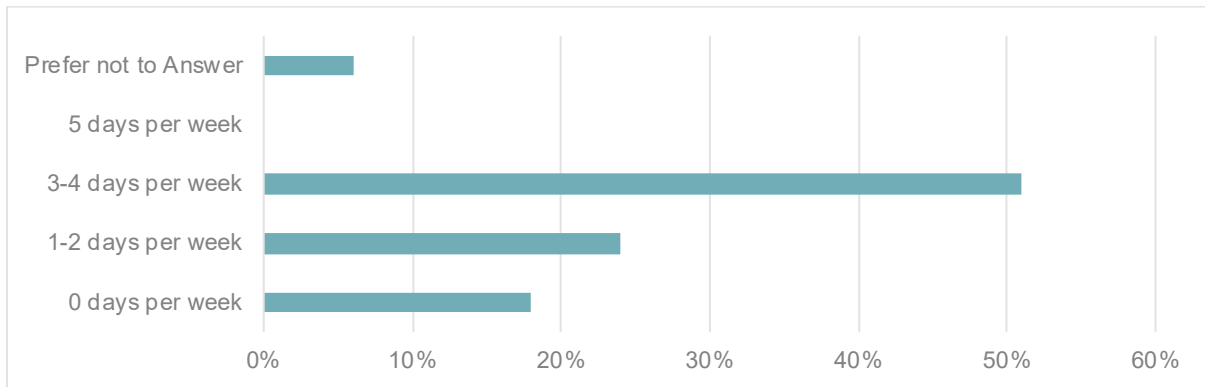
Source: NORTEX User Survey Results

Figure 16 – How many times per week did you typically use public transportation prior to COVID-19?



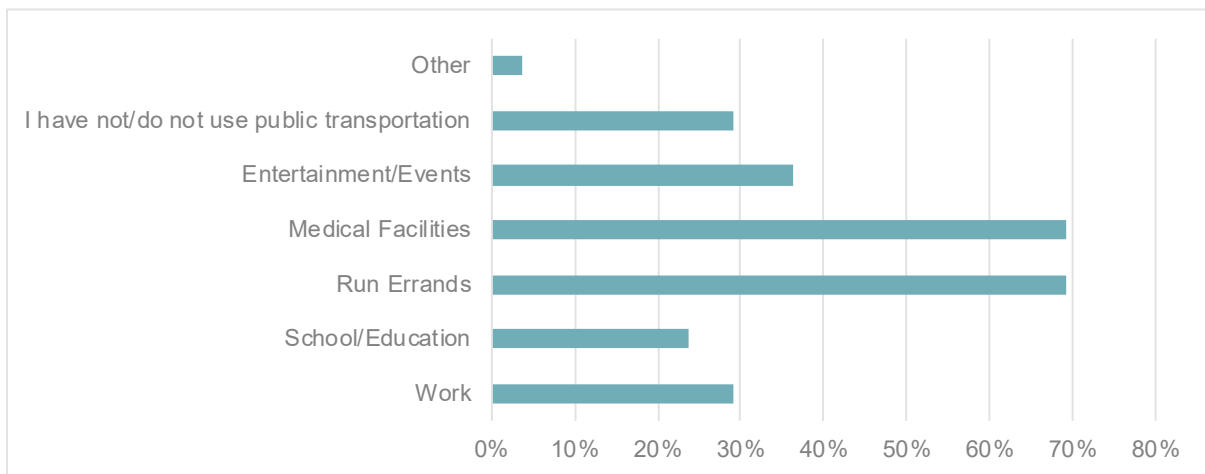
Source: NORTEX User Survey Results

Figure 17 – How many times per week did you typically use public transportation since COVID-19?



Source: NORTEX User Survey Results

Figure 18 – What types of trips would you use public/alternative transportation services to get to?



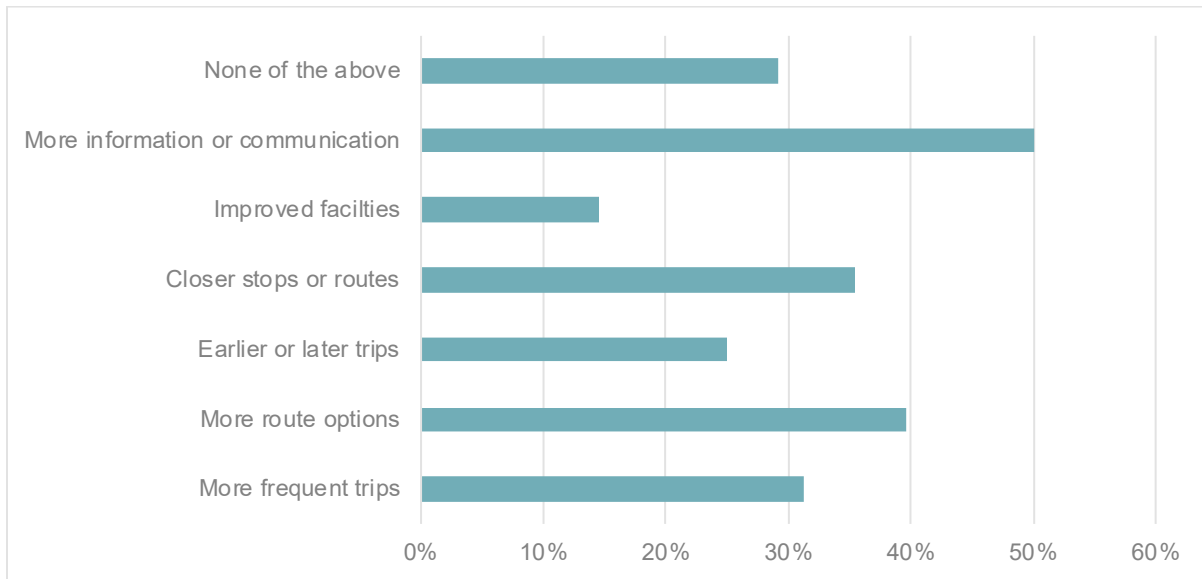
Source: NORTEX User Survey Results

Figure 19 – Choose the option you agree with about public transportation services in your area.

Question	Option A	Option B
<b>The cost is reasonable</b>	88% - <b>Yes</b>	12% - No, it is too high
<b>The service is near where I live and/or work</b>	68% - <b>Yes</b>	32% - No, it is too far
<b>The service is reliable</b>	73% - <b>Yes</b>	27% - No
<b>It is easy to request service</b>	65% - <b>Yes</b>	35% - No
<b>I know how to request service</b>	83% - <b>Yes</b>	17% - No
<b>Overall, I think the service is operating well</b>	50% - <b>Yes</b>	50% - No, I think the service could be improved

Source: NORTEX User Survey Results

Figure 20 – What changes would make it more likely for you to ride public transportation services?



Source: NORTEX User Survey Results

## Health and Human Services Survey

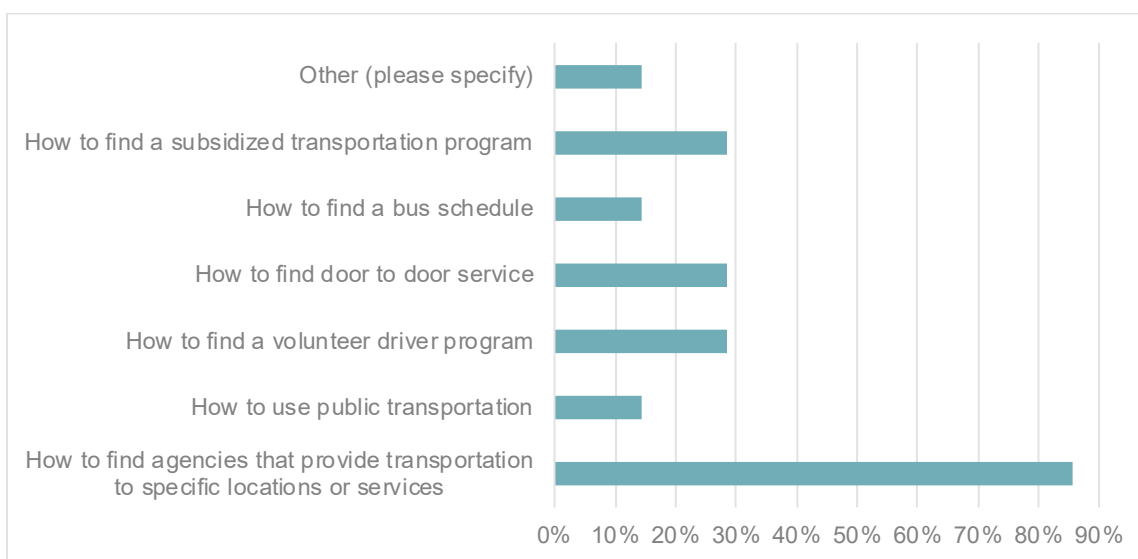
The health and human services survey was conducted in order to provide NRPC with an understanding of the varying agencies and transportation needs among those served. Eight health and human service organizations responded to the survey request and their responses were studied in this section. The survey revealed that most agencies serve Wichita, Wilbarger, Hardeman, and Archer counties. In comparison to other service providers, SHARP Lines (Rolling Plains Management) was most widely used among riders. Although most users noted that no changes were needed to encourage increased ridership, many people stated that better information and communication would be beneficial.

The following figures summarize responses from the health and human services survey:

- **Figure 21** – What types of questions do clients typically ask relating to transportation?
- **Figure 22** – If your clients report that they do not use public transportation, what are the reasons that they commonly report?
- **Figure 23** – What is the primary mode of transportation for your clients?
- **Figure 24** – What methods are most useful to help you with clients' transportation needs or questions they may have?

As can be seen in **Figure 21**, many services noted that clients frequently ask how they can find agencies that provide transportation to specific locations or services.

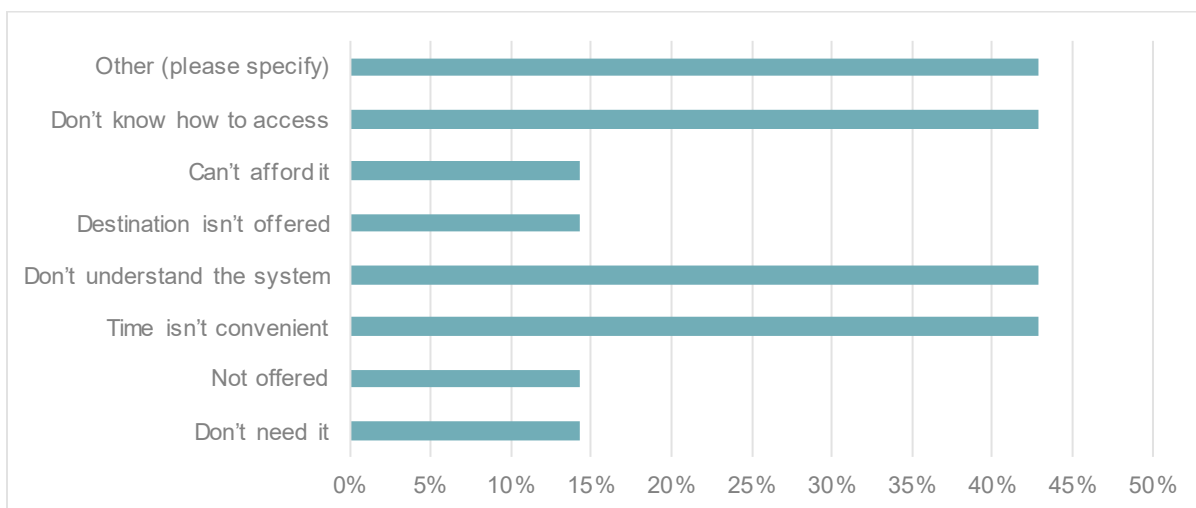
Figure 21 – What types of questions do clients typically ask relating to transportation?



Source: NORTEX Human Services Survey Results

Most clients that do not use public transportation have stated that it is due to the time being inconvenient, or simply not understanding the system or knowing how to access it. These reasons are summarized in **Figure 22**.

Figure 22 – If your clients report that they do not use public transportation, what are the reasons that they commonly report?

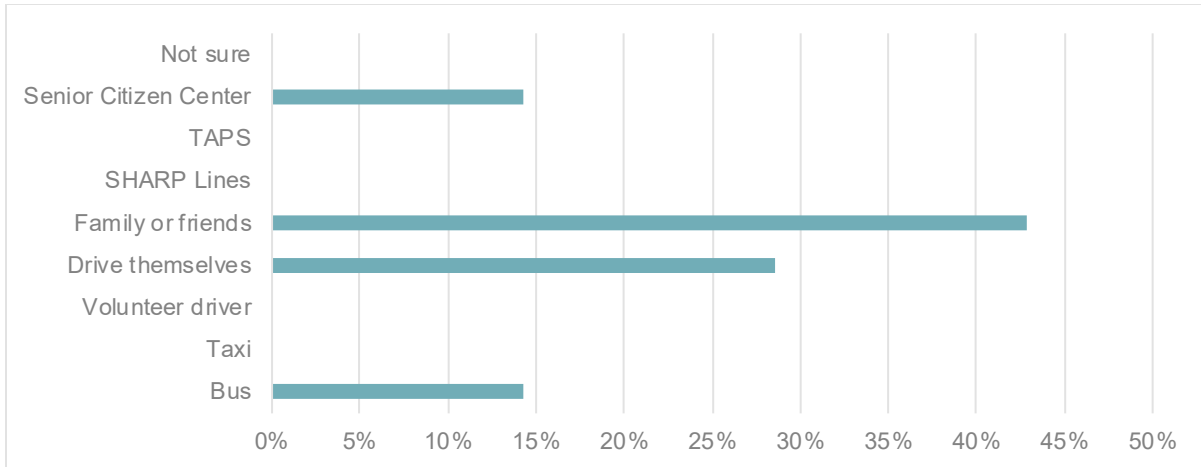


Source: NORTEX Human Services Survey Results.



As shown in **Figure 23**, most services have noted that their clients primarily depend upon family, friends, or driving themselves as their main mode of transportation. Public transportation such as TAPS, or SHARP Lines are not prioritized as the primary means of transportation.

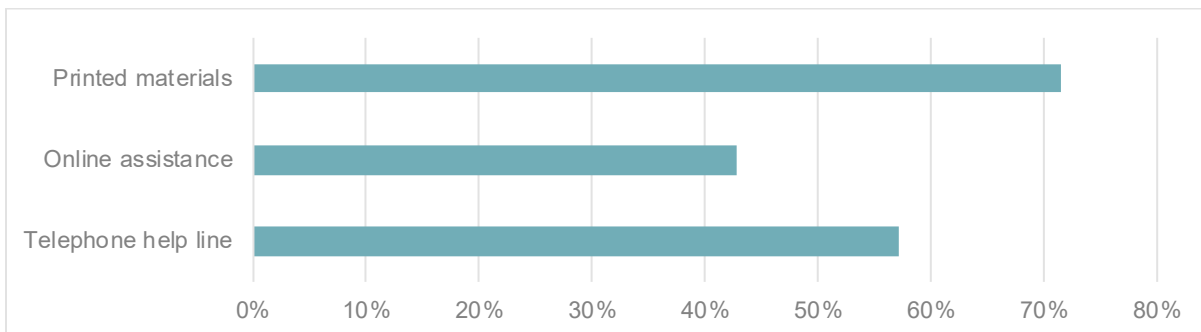
*Figure 23 – What is the primary mode of transportation for your clients?*



Source: NORTEX Human Services Survey Results

Overall, health and human service organizations are comfortable providing their clients with information about transportation options and taking part in online training to learn more about the available services. As **Figure 24** reveals, it would be beneficial to provide supplemental materials such as printed documents, a telephone help line, and/or online assistance for transportation users to access.

*Figure 24 – What methods are most useful to help you with clients' transportation needs or questions they may have?*



Source: NORTEX Human Services Survey Results

A complete list of survey responses from the health and human services survey can be found in **Appendix H**. Additionally, a complete list of the compiled health and human service organizations in the Nortex study area can be found in **Appendix I**.

## Transportation Needs and Gaps

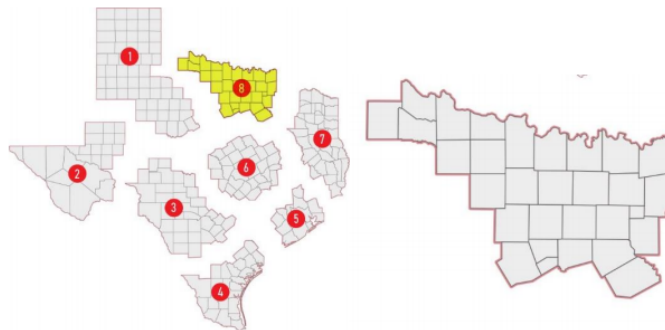
Through demographic and survey data, general themes have highlighted various needs and gaps within the Nortex region regarding transportation services.

On the rural western edge of the Nortex region, low population density along with higher concentrations of poverty and disability create challenges for transportation accessibility. These areas currently have service provided by Rolling Plains Management SHARP Lines, but there are still users that find it challenging to request service or find servicing in close proximity to where they live or work. On the more densely populated eastern edge of the Nortex region, travel time to get to work generally takes over 25 minutes. Although a large majority of these areas are currently serviced by SHARP and TAPS, the higher population concentrations may require more transportation service support.

Results collected from the *Texas Veterans Needs Assessment Report* also aligned with the surveys conducted. The consensus from all the studies led to the identification of similar service barriers including a lack of general understanding and service providers as highlighted in **Figure 25**. Low accessibility to healthcare services was also identified as a common theme among the survey results. One difference between the results garnered is a larger population of veterans in the Nortex region reflected in the TVC Report. In contrast, Nortex human services and user survey results reflected a larger percentage of people with disabilities.

Figure 25 – TVC FVA Region 8: North Texas

### TVC FVA REGION 8 – NORTH TEXAS



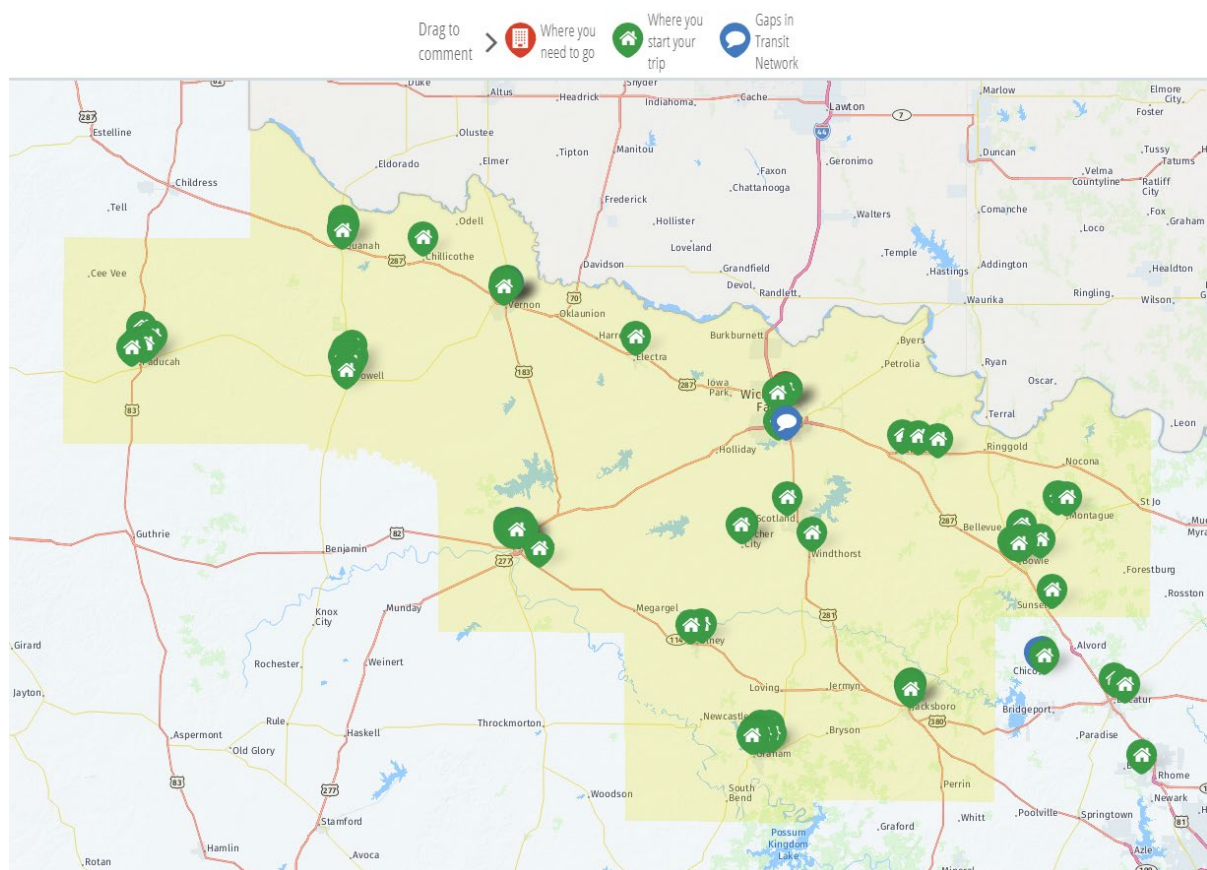
FVA GRANT NEEDS	STATEWIDE NEEDS	INDIVIDUAL NEEDS	UNMET REGIONAL NEEDS	SERVICE BARRIERS	INFORMATION SOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clinical Counseling</li> <li>• Employment Support</li> <li>• Short-Term Financial Assistance</li> <li>• Integrative Therapies</li> <li>• Home Modification Assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthcare Support</li> <li>• VA Disability Claims Assistance</li> <li>• Employment Support</li> <li>• Clinical Counseling</li> <li>• Assistance for Women Veterans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VA Disability Claims Assistance</li> <li>• Help with Navigating VA Healthcare</li> <li>• Integrative Therapies</li> <li>• Business Startup Help</li> <li>• Employment Support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthcare Support</li> <li>• Clinical Counseling</li> <li>• Short-Term Financial</li> <li>• Employment Support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding Benefits</li> <li>• Knowing Where to Get Help</li> <li>• Getting Appointments</li> <li>• Potential Costs and Finances</li> <li>• Few Service Providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VA</li> <li>• Friends or Family</li> <li>• VSOs</li> <li>• Internet</li> <li>• TVC</li> </ul>

Survey Highlights (N = 4,328)

Source: TVC Report

The full-length users survey included an option for users to input where they initiated their trip, where they needed to go on public transit, and gaps they saw in the transit network. These were pinned on an interactive map and can be seen in **Figure 26**. The graphic reinforced what was found in the demographic and geographic study of the Nortex study area. There are certain areas, such as the City of Wichita Falls where there is a higher density and concentration of people, but other than these areas, people are dispersed throughout all the counties.

*Figure 26 – RCTP Interactive Map*



Source: Social Pinpoint

*\*Note: Users provided a zip code, so the pins shown are approximate locations only.*

In addition to the gaps identified above, a significant unmet need identified by most of the providers was a lack of adequate funding for services. As was detailed in the *Transportation Resources in the Region* chapter, there is a high ridership cost that is heavily subsidized by the providers.

Some of the needs identified through the outreach effort are summarized in **Table 6**. The desire of these needs was reinforced by the general users of the services with nearly a third of respondents indicating that service was not reliable indicating that they do not have enough information about bus locations and stops.

Table 6 – Transportation Needs in the Region

Transportation Needs in the Region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance existing vehicle fleets with new purchases to replace vehicles past their useful life</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve amenities at bus stops including the provision of bus shelters and real-time information for bus arrivals</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve coordination amongst providers and health &amp; human service agencies</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve information and communication methods for users</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve service time options and availability</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide sufficient pool of drivers with proper qualifications (specifically commercial driver's licenses)</li> </ul>

The transportation needs in the region were identified through existing transportation services inventory review, stakeholder interviews, health and human service provider surveys, transportation service user surveys, and several other readily available data sources.

The transportation resources inventory provided a snapshot of other agency providers in the region, each provider's roles and resources in the region, and where opportunities may exist for additional coordination of resources between providers. Surveys were distributed to each of the identified service providers to populate these data points.

The public outreach process provided insight as to how the region's residents utilize transportation services, respondent household characteristics, and where respondents believe gaps exist in current services. Surveys were distributed with the help of the region's service providers. An interactive map survey was also provided for the public to document needs and gaps,

## Recommendations and Next Steps

Results from the survey responses received by users and the health and human service agencies indicated that there are challenges in people lacking knowledge on how to access service as well as coordination challenges amongst providers and other agencies. These issues are exacerbated by funding and technology constraints in the existing transportation system. Since funding opportunities are limited, innovative and cost-effective solutions should be explored to provide transportation services to priority populations. Additionally, there are opportunities for partnership among different providers to unify service-request platforms to make it easier for users to understand service areas and how to take transit. Some of these strategies are highlighted below:

### Potential Strategies

- A. Set up bi-yearly or yearly meetings between providers and health and human services organizations to improve coordination and identify additional opportunities to enhance service.
- B. Create a unified and easy-to-understand ridership guide with frequently asked questions that can be distributed at health and human services organizations. It should be a priority to make these accessible for the general public but especially for the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and people who do not speak English as their first language.
- C. Improve the distribution, or if not currently distributed, create on-board surveys to gauge general users' views of providers' service. This can also be an effective tool to test and identify the implementation of other bus technologies or improvements.

- D. Continue to track service changes and other metrics to understand impact on ridership. Pursue strategies that boost ridership and enhance coverage to underserved populations.
- E. Work on identifying tools to provide users with more methods to request service in addition to calling a phone number or emailing. Another major focus for all agencies should be to work toward same-day request service so users can access rides the same day as much as it is feasible.
- F. Support existing training programs, improve advertising campaigns to search for drivers, and increase wages paid to drivers to compete with other industries which require similar skills and licenses.
- G. Create in-house training programs such as a truck driving school and workforce centers that build upon community college relationships.

## 4. Planning for Comprehensive Services

The Nortex region's service area is vastly rural in nature and has limited population centers separated by significant distances. Low population density and an aging population poses challenges for the proper transportation service coverage needed in the area. Of the 11 counties within the service area, seven have 10 or fewer persons per square mile as opposed to the average of 96 per square mile in the state.

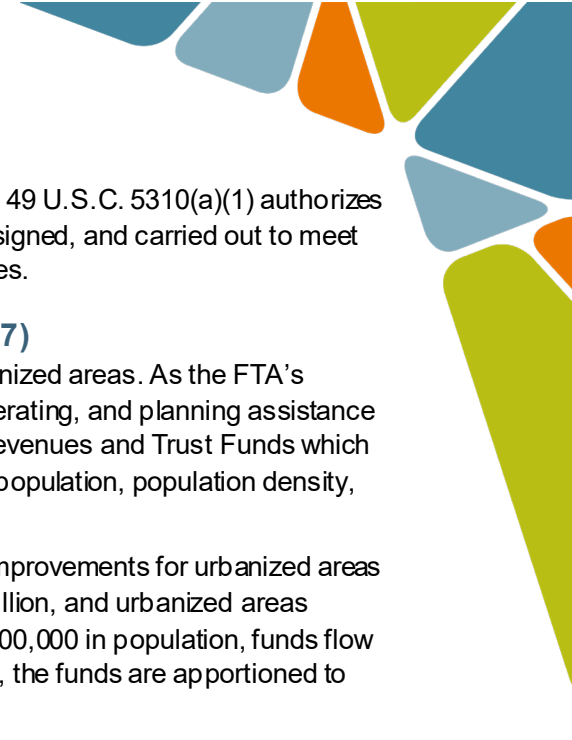
Wichita Falls serves as the major population and commercial center and is home to many of the human service providers within the region. The City operates a public transportation system that adequately strives to meet the needs of the small urban service area. The development of a "transportation hub" within the Wichita Falls Transportation System has been a catalyst for the continued development and use of the public transportation system in the region.

The Nortex Regionally Coordinated Transportation Planning Committee realizes that the continued development of transportation services is critical to the region and may require non-traditional methods to meet those needs. Resources such as Section 5310, 5307, and 5311 serve as tools that provide financial assistance towards qualifying initiatives.

### **Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310)**

Established in 1975 as a discretionary capital assistance program, Section 5310, provides funding to states for the purpose of assisting private nonprofit groups to meet the transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities. These funds are allocated based on the state's population for each of these two groups. The program works to improve mobility for seniors and disabled individuals by removing barriers to transportation service and expanding mobility options. Some of the traditional project examples include buses and vans, wheelchair lifts, ramps, and securement devices, transit-related information technology systems, including scheduling/routing/one-call systems, mobility management programs, and acquisition of transportation services under a contract, lease, or other arrangement.

Section 5310 funds are made available to the state during the fiscal year of apportionment with two additional years. The funds are based on the number of seniors and people with disabilities within each state. FTA apportions the funds appropriated annually to the States based on an administrative formula that takes into consideration the number of Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities



in each State. These funds are subject to annual appropriations. Title 49 U.S.C. 5310(a)(1) authorizes funding for public transportation capital projects that are planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities.

### **Urbanized Area Formula Program (Section 5307)**

Section 5307 is a formula grant program working specifically for urbanized areas. As the FTA's primary transit assistance program, the program provides capital, operating, and planning assistance for mass transportation. The program is funded from both General Revenues and Trust Funds which are apportioned to urbanized areas using a formula that is based on population, population density, and other factors associated with transit service and ridership.

Section 5307 urbanized area formula funds are available for transit improvements for urbanized areas over 1 million population, urbanized areas between 200,000 and 1 million, and urbanized areas between 50,000 and 200,000 population. For urbanized areas over 200,000 in population, funds flow directly to the designated recipient. For areas that are under 200,000, the funds are apportioned to the government of each state for distribution.

One percent of appropriated Section 5307 funds are also set-aside to be used for transit enhancement projects that physically or functionally enhance transit service or use. Preventive maintenance is eligible for FTA capital assistance at an 80 percent Federal share. FY 1999 operating assistance is available only to urbanized areas with populations that fall under 200,000.

### **Non-Urbanized Area Formula Program (Section 5311)**

The formula grants Non-Urbanized Areas is a formula-based rural program that provides funding to states for the purpose of supporting public transportation in rural areas with population of less than 50,000.

Section 5311 is works to enhance the people's access within non-urbanized areas to health care, shopping, education, employment, employment training, public services, and recreation. The program is also intended to assist in the maintenance, development, improvement, and use of public transportation systems in non-urbanized areas.

### **Federal Funding**

The following federal programs and grants also serve as potential funding sources for the Nortex region:

- Access and Mobility Partnership
- Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities 5310
- Mobility for All Pilot Program
- Areas of Persistent Poverty
- Formula Grants for Rural Areas 5311
- Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities 5339
- Helping Obtain Prosperity for Everyone
- Rural Transportation Assistance 5311(b)(3)
- Metropolitan Transportation Planning Program 5303
- Metropolitan and Statewide Planning and Non-Metropolitan Transportation Planning 5304

Local expertise should be utilized throughout the grant and federal program application process to determine the most successful strategies in the past for regional partners and agencies.

Depending on the type of grant, one of the potential strategies could be to include a narrative about how transit improvements also help active transportation networks. Highlighting increased property

values near bike and pedestrian trails can be leveraged as an additional factor to an integrated mobility network.



## 5. Integrated Planning Processes

### The Nortex Regional Planning Commission (NRPC)

The State of Texas authorized counties, cities, and political subdivisions to establish regional planning commissions which led to the formation of the Nortex Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) on January 27, 1966. NRPC has since worked in conjunction with local as well as state and federal governments. Past initiatives have focused on efforts within emergency medical services, alcohol abuse, maternal infant healthcare, and housing. Through current program efforts, NRPC's responsibilities include implementing regional programs addressing aging, employment, 9-1-1 emergency services, solid waste, and community development. NRPC has the ability to review grant applications that originate within the Nortex region. This ensures that projects awarded with federal and/or state dollars are consistent with the local and area wide plans of the region. This review process encourages an efficient use of taxpayer's dollars. The NRPC is governed by an Executive Committee that is comprised of local elected officials that represent member government bodies within the region.

The NRPC aims to eliminate duplication of services while promoting economy and efficiency through coordination. Regional services include:

- Technical assistance to local governments in economic development, community development, demographics, planning, grant applications, and other areas
- Administering federal or state programs that benefit from regional corporations such as economic development, 9-1-1 emergency service, criminal justice, and drug enforcement, community development, solid waste, employment and training, and services to the elderly
- Coordinating federal, state, and local projects or issues that cross the boundaries of individual governments

The NRPC works to facilitate regional public transportation planning by defining the needs for public transportation, assisting in the development of public transportation providers, promoting coordination of services to eliminate duplication, and facilitating the sharing of resources and services to meet the public transportation needs of the region. The Nortex region's significant distance to destinations, smaller population centers, aging population, limited number of service providers, lack of overlapping service areas, and shared human services providers require a coordinated effort to eliminate waste and inefficiencies.



## Wichita Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization (WFMPO)

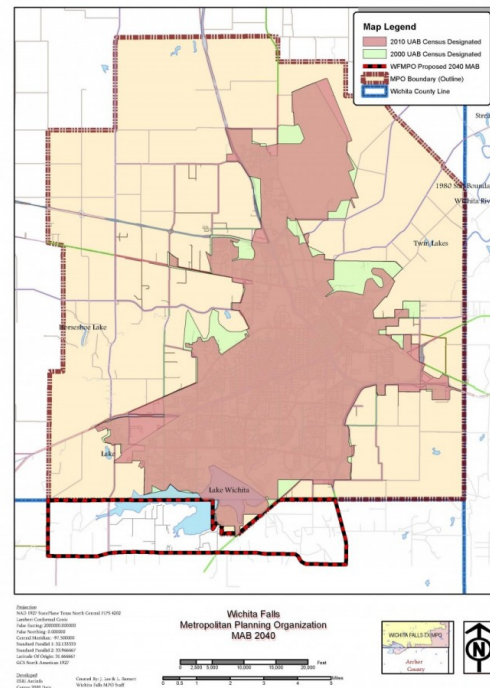
The Wichita Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization (WFMPO) is a federally mandated organization developed to coordinate the highway, transit, and land-use planning process, making it possible to receive federal funds for highway and transit improvements (see **Figure 26**).

As the regional transportation planning organization, the WFMPO works with local, state, and federal governments, the private sector, and the region's citizens, to plan coordinated transportation systems within the MPO area. Wichita Falls MPO coordinates regional transportation planning between the State of Texas, Wichita County and the cities of Wichita Falls, Pleasant Valley and Lakeside City. Wichita Falls MPO aims to bring about regional planning under one voice while providing the greatest transportation benefit for all. Other goals include supporting economic vitality, making transportation safer, providing greater access to mobility options, protecting the environment while promoting energy conservation, improving connectivity of the current transportation system, and preserving existing transportation infrastructure.

The Wichita Falls MPO was established by the federal government to ensure that transportation decisions within the MPO area are performed in a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative process. The MPO is responsible for creating, developing, and reviewing transportation plans, which include the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, Unified Planning Work Program, travel models, thoroughfare plans, transit plans, and bicycle/pedestrian plans. These documents work together to identify both transportation programs and funding alternatives.

According to the Wichita Falls MPO, Congress has passed subsequent transportation reauthorization laws since 1973. The newest reauthorization known as Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) was signed into law on December 4, 2015. The FAST Act authorizes \$305 billion over fiscal years 2016 through 2020 for highway, highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, rail, and research, technology, and statistics programs. Previous reauthorizations include Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU), Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), and Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA).

Figure 27 – WFMPO



Source: Wichita Falls MPO



## **Cross Plains Rural Transportation Council (CPRTC)**

The Cross Plains Rural Transportation Council (CPRTC) was initiated in 2001 to better address federal and state guidelines relating to public involvement within rural communities in the transportation planning process.

The CPRTC serves to represent the rural communities of the nine counties of the TxDOT Wichita Falls District which among the Nortex counties includes Wilbarger, Baylor, Wichita, Archer, Young, Clay, and Montague. The CPRTC assists local TxDOT officials by incorporating county, state and other political officials from outside the Wichita Falls metropolitan area into one united group.

The CPRTC works to communicate local project needs so that towns, counties and rural cities have the opportunity to get involved in the early stages of project planning and selection.

## **NRPC, WFMPO and CPRTC**

All of these planning entities are responsible for a significant portion of the transportation planning in the North Texas Region and share the common characteristic of being the designated forum for cooperative decision making. These entities are responsible for executing the transportation planning process in their respective jurisdictions. Federal transportation law and planning regulations require the NRPC, WFMPO, CPRTC, and the State DOT to include the public and other stakeholders in their planning process and garner their input on a large array of planning products. The public involvement process ensures that the coordinated transit human services planning process is included in the makeup of the complete range of planning products utilized to develop and implement transportation plans. Through the active involvement of agencies in the different sectors of society, these transportation plans demonstrate that all types of transportation modes help shape the area's economic health, quality of life, patterns of growth, environmental resource consumption, social equity, land use, urban growth, economic development, safety, and security.

## 6. Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives

### Vision Statement

Public transportation for the RCTP will integrate systems that coordinate with all service providers within and adjacent to the service area, creating a seamless multimodal transportation network that works in alignment with the Nortex region's economic, environmental, and quality of life objectives.

### Mission Statement

The mission of the Nortex Regionally Coordinated Transportation Planning Committee (NRCTPC) in the development and maintenance of our transportation plan is to serve people residing in, working in, or visiting the North Texas Region by providing a coordinated, efficient, and accessible public transportation system.

### Goals and Objectives

As discussed in the prior section of the plan, the region's transportation providers actively participated in updating the Texas Panhandle RCTP to help identify the region's goals and objectives. The NRCTPC Committee has determined three (3) potential goals for the next five (5) years. These goals are outlined to help give direction to the coordinated planning efforts if funds become available for implementation and should not be construed as binding or mandated.

These goals are to be considered by transportation providers in the region. They are not goals that can be attained solely through planning and are not the direct responsibility of NRCTPC or its members. The defined goals are based on the essential stakeholder strategic planning session and the received client and service provider surveys. The goals, objectives and strategies constitute a general outline to allow for a continued coordinated public transportation planning effort from the stakeholder committee.

Table 6 – Goals, Objectives, and Targets

Goal #1: Bridge the transportation gap between service providers and clients	
<b>Objective A:</b> <b>Expand service to meet needs of clients.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce “Not Offered”, “Time Isn’t Convenient”, “Don’t Understand the System”, “Can’t Afford It”, and “Don’t Know How to Access the System” comments made by clients</li> <li>• Reduce dependence of clients on “Friends or Family” and “Themselves” and increase dependence on forms of Public Transportation</li> </ul>
<b>Objective B:</b> <b>Increase quality of service.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase on-time performance to increase reliability of systems to clients</li> <li>• Improve or build new transportation facilities.</li> <li>• Enhance existing vehicle fleets with new purchases to replace vehicles past their useful life.</li> <li>• Improve amenities at bus stops including the provision of bus shelters and real-time information for bus arrivals.</li> </ul>
Goal #2: Improve communications between service providers and clients	
<b>Objective A:</b> <b>Improve coordination amongst providers and health &amp; human service agencies.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase availability and access of transportation information materials (e.g., printed materials, online assistance, telephone helpline).</li> <li>• Increase health &amp; human service agencies’ comfort level when sharing information about transportation options with their clients.</li> </ul>
<b>Objective B:</b> <b>Improve information and communication methods for users.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase availability of information resources made available to clients.</li> <li>• Increase the frequency of clients contacting their county for information about area transit service providers.</li> <li>• Increase the frequency of clients asking service providers how to use public transportation.</li> <li>• Increase the number of clients aided in their search for a subsidized transportation program.</li> </ul>
Goal #3: Increase efficiency and effectiveness	
<b>Objective A:</b> <b>Work with and support transit providers in their mobility coordination efforts.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase productivity via increasing passengers per vehicle hour or mile.</li> <li>• Increase cost efficiency via decreasing operating cost per passengers.</li> <li>• Increase frequency of meetings between different transportation providers in region.</li> </ul>
<b>Objective B:</b> <b>Provide sufficient pool of drivers with proper qualifications.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase available drivers with appropriate qualification to meet service needs.</li> </ul>

## 7. Sustain Planning and Implement Plan

With a diverse array of transportation services in the Nortex region, there poses a strong need to identify and clearly communicate the region's service needs. The needs were identified through outreach efforts and are detailed in **Section 3: Comprehensive Assessment of the Public's Unmet Transportation Needs**. The needs identified were:

1. Improve or build new transportation facilities
2. Enhance existing vehicle fleets with new purchases to replace vehicles past their useful life
3. Improve amenities at bus stops including the provision of bus shelters, and real-time information for bus arrivals
4. Improve coordination amongst providers and health & human service agencies
5. Improve information and communication methods for users
6. Improve service time options and availability
7. Provide sufficient pool of drivers with proper qualifications (specifically CDLs)

The needs are primarily resolved through funding for agencies and Nortex from federal, state, or local sources. In order to properly sustain and implement the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan, the Nortex Regional Planning Committee must facilitate more meetings between all public transportation providers in the area. At these meetings, future decision to aid the progress can be made to ensure all users in the Nortex region are properly served. At the same time, strategies to determine how vulnerable and priority populations can be better included in any planned changes. Frequent meetings and consistent coordination are very important to the success of this project given the variety of providers.

## 8. Performance Measures to Evaluate Effectiveness

It is important to consider the variety of public transportation systems as well as gaps and priorities in selection of effective performance measures. Bearing this in mind, a summary of the different systems, shown below in **Table 8**, and the identified goals were considered in the development of the evaluation measures.

*Table 8 – Provider Summary*

Falls Ride	SHARP Lines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Public fixed route</li><li>■ Serves Wichita Falls</li><li>■ Additionally offers “Grocery Cart,” “Night Crawler,” and deviations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Rural demand-response</li><li>■ Serves Archer, Baylor, Cottle, Foard, Hardeman, Jack, rural Wichita, Wilbarger, and Young counties</li><li>■ Offers rides to medical, dental, eye centers and social service agencies</li></ul>
TAPS	Trans Star Ambulance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Demand-response</li><li>■ Serves Clay and Montague</li><li>■ Offers in-town, out of town, out of county transit</li><li>■ Rides typically for employment, education, and medical appointments</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Medical response</li><li>■ Serves Wichita Falls</li><li>■ Transports emergency and non-emergency patients to local hospitals</li></ul>

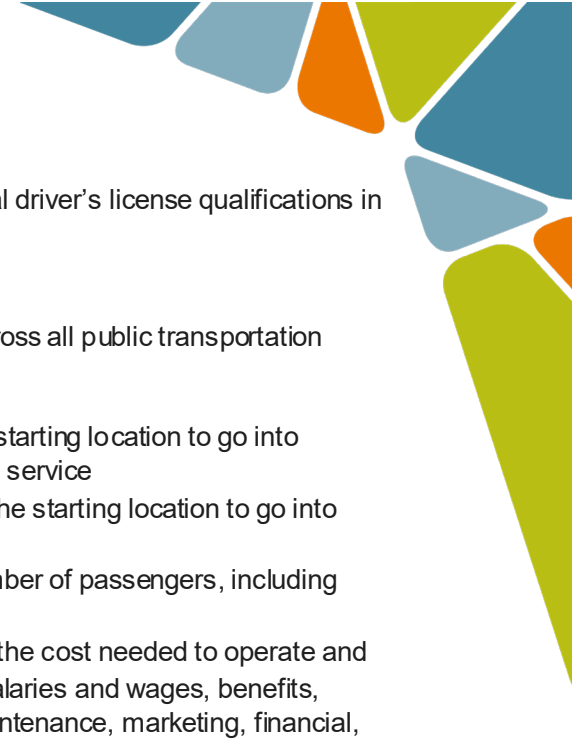
### Quantitative Data

#### Performance Data for Nortex Public Transportation Systems

Measuring and assessing Nortex public transportation systems’ performance requires that metrics be identified and understood in the context of the Nortex region system. This is an important step that will help improve consistency in data definitions and reporting. Since the Nortex region contains a diverse collection of systems, representing urban to rural as well as public fixed route and demand-response, a variety of challenges must be addressed. Rural transit systems may have limited administrative staff to perform data collection tasks which may be challenging without the proper technology tools such as a computer-assisted scheduling/dispatch (CASD) system. Ultimately, considering that data collection can be difficult, limiting the quantitative measures is better for efficiency. Still, it is important for the Nortex region to continue efforts to identify key performance data and other data elements that are often collected for performance assessment purposes.

#### Factors Influencing Nortex Public Transportation Systems’ Performance

There are many different factors that affect the performance of Nortex public transportation systems. Most rural systems regard the size of the service area as a challenge and major factor affecting performance. Many rural systems serve multi-county areas and provide trip lengths that exceed 100 or more miles. Long trips have a negative effect on efficiency, limiting the number of passenger trips that can be carried each hour. This factor is one that is generally classified as uncontrollable (i.e., something the SHARP Lines cannot change). Additionally, available capital, in the form of vehicle fleets, can also negatively affect the cost efficiency and satisfaction associated with a system, as fleets contain vehicles past their useful life. Beyond this, all Nortex region public transportation



systems must have a sufficient pool of drivers with proper commercial driver's license qualifications in order to provide reliable transportation services.

### **Elements to Assess Performance**

The metrics shown below were selected to evaluate performance across all public transportation systems in the Nortex region:

- Vehicle-hours: the time from when transit vehicle leaves the starting location to go into service until the time that the vehicle returns after completing service
- Vehicle-miles: the mileage from when transit vehicle leaves the starting location to go into service until the vehicle returns after completing service
- Passenger trips: also called ridership, is the count of the number of passengers, including children, who board transit vehicles
- Total operating expense: also called total operating costs, is the cost needed to operate and administer transit services day-to-day. This should include salaries and wages, benefits, materials supplies, insurance, taxes, cleaning, and other maintenance, marketing, financial, procurement, planning, and legal costs
- On-time performance: trips where the transit vehicle arrives at the scheduled pick-up location within the system's definition of on-time; some systems may measure on-time performance at the drop-off end, so on-time is when the rider gets to their destination by the promised time

Through attainment of these measures, a number of other identifying characteristics can be determined, including passengers per vehicle hour or mile, operating cost per vehicle hour or mile, and operating cost per passengers. The combination of these measures allows for an understanding of a systems productivity as well cost, which can be used as indicators for improving system efficiency. Lastly, identifying on-time performance gives a strong quantitative representation of user experience. Achieve targets of increasing on-time performance will lead to a better user experience as the system demonstrates reliability.

### **Qualitative Data**

In addition to these quantitative data elements, the Nortex region planned for and conducted user surveys to further assess the region's overall performance. Input garnered from the various surveys helped to obtain well rounded feedback to identify and define the gaps and needs within the region. Surveys which were conducted informed much of the decision making in the development of this report but continuing to elicit feedback regarding the system will be important in evaluating improvements and if objectives are being achieved. Feedback from the users, health & human services agencies, and the public transportation systems themselves will be valuable to collect and report on a regular basis. Through this feedback, aspects of the systems such as user accessibility, equity, and economic impacts can be considered.

### **Targets and Goals**

Through consideration of needs, goals, and performance metrics discussed previously in this report, targets were defined according to each objective and shown in Table 8.1 through 8.3.



Table 7.1 – Goal 1

Goal #1: Bridge the Transportation Gap between Service Providers and Clients				
Number	Target	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Performance Measures	Data Needed
1A: Expand service to meet needs of clients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce “Not Offered”, “Time Isn’t Convenient”, “Don’t Understand the System”, “Can’t Afford It”, and “Don’t Know How to Access the System” comments made by clients</li> </ul>	Medium	Survey Entire Ridership with Goal of 10% Response	Response to Targets
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce dependence of clients on “Friends or Family” and “Themselves” and increase dependence on forms of Public Transportation</li> </ul>	Medium	Survey Entire Ridership with Goal of 10% Response	Response to Targets
1B: Increase quality of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase on-time performance to increase reliability of systems to clients</li> </ul>	High	% of On-Time Trip Completion	Review of Trip Logs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance existing vehicle fleets with new purchases to replace vehicles past their useful life.</li> </ul>	High	New Vehicle Ratio Comparison (2021 vs Current Year)	Revenue Vehicle Inventory
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve amenities at bus stops including the provision of bus shelters and real-time information for bus arrivals.</li> </ul>	Medium	Passenger Shelter Ratio Comparison (2021 vs Current Year)	Passenger Shelter Infrastructure Inventory



Table 8.2 – Goal 2

Goal #2: Increase Communication with the Public and Promote Awareness of Transportation Services in the Region				
Number	Target	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Performance Measures	Data Needed
2A: Improve coordination amongst providers and health & human service agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase availability and access of transportation information materials (e.g., printed materials)</li> </ul>	Medium	How many pamphlets were distributed?	Number of pamphlets distributed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase health &amp; human service agencies' comfort level when sharing information about transportation options with their clients.</li> </ul>	Medium	Take health & human service agency staff for a ride on the system and teach how to ride transit	Staff Questionnaire
2B: Improve information and communication methods for users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase availability of information resources made available to clients.</li> </ul>	Medium	How many events did staff distribute transportation information?	Number of Events
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the frequency of clients contacting their county for information about area transit service providers.</li> </ul>	Medium	How many clients requested information?	Number of Inquiries
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the frequency of clients asking service providers how to use public transportation.</li> </ul>	Medium	How many clients requested information?	Number of Inquiries
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the number of clients aided in their search for a subsidized transportation program.</li> </ul>	Medium	How many clients requested information?	Number of Inquiries

Table 9.3 – Goal 3

Goal #3: Improve Coordination for Transportation Services				
Number	Target	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Performance Measures	Data Needed
3A: Work with and support transit providers in their mobility coordination efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase productivity via increasing passengers per vehicle hour or mile.</li> </ul>	Medium	Establish Quarterly Meetings with Transit Providers	Ratio Comparison (2021 PPVH/PPVM to Current)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase cost efficiency via decreasing operating cost per passengers.</li> </ul>	Medium	Establish Quarterly Meetings with Transit Providers	Ratio Comparison (2021 Operating Cost per passenger to Current)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase frequency of meetings between different transportation providers in region.</li> </ul>	Medium	Establish Quarterly Meetings with Transit Providers	Quarterly Meeting Attendance
3B: Provide sufficient pool of drivers with proper qualifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase available drivers with appropriate qualification to meet service needs.</li> </ul>	High	Number of drivers hired vs Number of drivers lost	Driver Ratio

These goals and objectives are designed to be a guide for future projects to be undertaken by the members of the NRCTPC advisory committee. By including information related to the priority, timeframe, resources, and feasibility of each objective, NRPC Staff and transit stakeholders can measure the potential success of a project through innovative funding streams or opportunities to streamline programs within the individual entities. The over-arching goals of the regionally coordinated transportation planning process include providing a high level of service in the most convenient form possible for transit riders.



## APPENDIX A:

# TRANSPORTATION PROVIDER SURVEY







## APPENDIX B:

# TRANSPORTATION PROVIDER INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS







## APPENDIX C:

# FLEET INVENTORY







## APPENDIX D:

# TRANSPORTATION PROVIDER QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE SURVEY SUMMARY RESULTS







## APPENDIX E:

# GENERAL USERS SURVEY







## APPENDIX F:

# GENERAL USERS SURVEY RESULTS







## APPENDIX G:

# HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SURVEY







## APPENDIX H:

# HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SURVEY RESULTS







## APPENDIX I:

# HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS







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