The Last Mile

Increasing transit accessibility

The terms “first mile/last mile” refer to the distance a person must travel to get to or from a transit stop. DART is working with transportation partners to increase the options available to bridge that distance and make riding transit a viable choice for more people.

Continued Page 2

Ask Gary!
The inside track from President/Executive Director Gary Thomas

Why is it important to pay attention to the first/last mile of a customer’s trip? We must consider the entire trip – not just DART’s part – if we are going to persuade more people to ride public transportation.

Locally and nationally, people are changing the ways they travel. We’re monitoring services many are now using: innovative models for ride sharing, car and bike sharing, and trip planning. DART is on trend with our GoPass\textsuperscript{TM} mobile ticketing app and on-demand services like Flex and On-Call routes. Our partnership with Uber (see Page 2) is both progressive and intriguing to other transit agencies.

But we must continue adapting to combine these first/last-mile services with public transportation, and be open to new service models to remain relevant to all of our riders. By keeping DART safe, efficient and effective, transit will be a preferred means of travel for those customers.

Riding the Love Link
Colorful bus wraps, improved signage and more stops are drawing attention to Love Link Route 524, which connects DART Rail and Dallas Love Field.

Continued Page 3
The Last Mile  

DART partners with new services

Making transit a viable choice for new customers, especially the millennial market, is essential to growing ridership and maintaining public support for transit. Many residences and businesses within DART’s 13-city service area lie beyond walking distance from a bus stop or train station. Helping customers solve the “last mile” challenge is an agency – and a transit industry – priority.

Share the Ride
DART initially partnered with ride-sharing service Uber for the Dallas St. Patrick’s Parade and Festival in March – one of the agency’s largest ridership days. In April, DART added a link to the Uber mobile site in the “Events & Offers” section of the GoPass mobile ticketing application. Travelers who begin or end their trips in places not easily served by DART now can take the train or bus for the longest portion of the trip, and Uber for the short leg.

“Uber is excited to partner with DART to seamlessly connect North Texans to the existing public transit infrastructure and provide rides to areas where bus and rail routes don’t run,” said Leandre Johns, Uber general manager. “Through this partnership, we’re able to provide reliable door-to-door service for a fraction of the cost of other transportation options, making the region that much more accessible to residents, commuters and tourists.”

Borrow a Vehicle
At Mockingbird Station, car-sharing service Zipcar has leased two parking spots. Members can rent either a sedan or pickup truck, depending on their needs, as a cost-effective option for transit riders whose destination is not easily reached by other means.

“We know that many Zipcar members combine their Ziptrips with other transportation options such as biking, walking and public transit to get around,” said Catie Clemens, market manager of Zipcar. “We are pleased that this partnership will provide even more access to both downtown Dallas and beyond and look forward to growing our relationship with DART.”

Zipcar hopes to lease parking spaces at more DART Rail stations.

Short Trips

MegaFest Returns to North Texas
MegaFest, a three-day, family-friendly festival presented by T.D. Jakes Ministries, returns to Dallas in August. Organizers expect the event to draw up to 85,000 people, 70 percent of whom will be from out of town.

This will be the second time MegaFest has been held in Dallas. Good public transportation was among the deciding factors in bringing the conference back to North Texas.

DART will play an important transportation role by moving attendees among conference venues, airports and hotels, as well as connecting them with restaurants, shopping, museums and other local attractions.
Travel at Dallas Love Field has increased significantly since last October’s expiration of the Wright Amendment and completion of terminal renovations. Now that carriers are allowed to fly nonstop to any U.S. destination, more people are using the regional airport.

Within the first full month of expanded flights after flying restrictions ended, Love Field officials reported a 37 percent increase in traffic.

Last December, DART began implementing enhancements to Route 524, which connects Dallas Love Field and Inwood/Love Field Station via an eight-minute bus ride. The route was rebranded as the “Love Link” and given a colorful bus design to match.

A second bus stop was added near baggage claim. Signage is being improved inside and outside the terminal and at the rail station – to better direct passengers to the correct bus boarding areas.

The improvements continue to pay dividends. Responding to customer feedback and a 50 percent increase in ridership, DART will begin using larger buses on the Love Link route in August, which will increase passenger capacity and luggage space.

Light rail ridership is tabulated using Federal Transit Administration-approved automatic passenger counters (APCs) as its official methodology.

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Sales and Use Tax Revenue

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$0 $10 $20 $30 $40 $50 $60

October 2013- March 2014
October 2014- March 2015
Forging New Connections

M-Line Trolley running on loop through the Dallas Arts District

On May 4, the M-Line Trolley – long a familiar sight in Uptown Dallas – began traveling over a loop through the Dallas Arts District. The new section of track provides greater access to downtown Dallas, adds stops near DART Rail at St. Paul and Pearl/Arts District stations, and covers the “last mile” for many downtown workers.

The track now extends from the original terminus farther into downtown along St. Paul Street, travels on Federal and Olive streets, and passes through Klyde Warren Park before hooking back up with the main line on McKinney Avenue. The trolleys began taking passengers in early May on a “soft opening” basis while the tracks were being tested.

“The trolley will be a great way to get to Uptown. It takes me right from my workplace to the liveliest part of the city,” said Jake Schement, an employee benefits analyst whose job is located along the M-Line’s path. “That the trolleys are air-conditioned and run frequently are definite pluses.”

DART is assisting the city of Dallas with a plan for a new streetcar alignment that would connect the M-Line Trolley with the Dallas Streetcar, which opened April 13. Both streetcars improve mobility in the city center and enhance accessibility to popular attractions.

“The M-Line extension provides transit access that the Crow Collection hasn’t had before,” said Amy Lewis Hofland, executive director of the Crow Collection of Asian Art. “Now it’s easier for tourists and residents of Uptown to get here, as well as park-goers at Klyde Warren Park.”

The new track also increases the M-Line’s usable fleet. The McKinney Avenue Transit Authority, which owns and operates the M-Line Trolley, acquired some 1930s- and 1940s-era vehicles that cannot operate in two directions. Now those heritage streetcars can travel around the loop downtown and then turn around using the turntable located at the other end of the line, near Cityplace/Uptown Station.

Reaching the Community

DART’s Transit Education programs are getting customers of all ages engaged and on board.

In April, the agency honored winners of the 2015 Student Art Contest, which helps develop the next generation of transit users. This year, more than 1,300 North Texas students from kindergarten through 12th grade submitted posters on the theme “Explore Your World with DART.”

In May, DART, the city of Dallas and the Community Council of Greater Dallas invited senior citizens to “Get into the Act” and celebrate Older Americans Month at the 21st annual Older Americans Information and Health Fair at Centennial Hall in Fair Park. Nearly 1,200 people attended the free event that featured health screenings, entertainment, giveaways and access to a wealth of information and resources.
Tracking Progress

Shuttles Make Commuting Easy
Elbert Stephenson is a contract irrigation technician who has worked at the Parkland Health & Hospital System campus for the past year. Although he owns a car, Stephenson says he prefers to use public transportation. He takes DART Rail to Southwestern Medical District/Parkland Station. Once there, he rides the free Parkland Shuttle to navigate throughout the property.

"Having the free shuttle bus available is an incentive to use public transit. It’s easy and convenient," Stephenson said. “Otherwise, I’d probably just drive my car to work.”

Shuttle services are developed in partnership with employers or major activity centers. In addition to Parkland, DART has shuttle agreements with Baylor University Medical Center, the city of Richardson (Galatyn Park), Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, Medical City Dallas Hospital, NorthPark Center, Southern Methodist University, Texas Instruments, The University of Texas at Dallas and UT Southwestern Medical Center.