

Topic of the Month: Regional Rail

Just a few years ago, getting from the eastern reaches of Collin County to DFW International Airport often meant navigating congested highways and suburban thoroughfares in which a single stalled vehicle could add significant time to a trip.

Today, that journey looks different, thanks in part to Dallas Area Rapid Transit's (DART) Silver Line, which celebrates its one-year anniversary Oct. 25. Spanning 26 miles from Plano through Richardson, Addison, Carrollton and Coppell, the line provides direct rail access from these communities to DFW Airport.

The Silver Line is a prime example of how regional rail continues to shape the way people travel in North Texas. From the Trinity Railway Express (TRE) to DART's expanding rail network, regional rail has evolved into an important part of the region's transportation system.

For October's Topic of the Month, we're deep diving into the history of regional rail and how it continues to play a role in moving North Texas into the future.

Trinity Railway Express

A pioneer of modern commuter rail in the Southwest, the Trinity Railway Express (TRE) officially debuted Dec. 30, 1996, initially operating between downtown Dallas and Irving. Over the next few years, the line expanded west, eventually reaching downtown Fort Worth's Intermodal Transportation Center and T&P Station in 2001, connecting the region's two anchor cities by passenger rail for the first time in decades.

Today, the 34-mile corridor serves 10 stations, providing another transportation option for people traveling between Dallas and Fort Worth and communities along the corridor. Operated jointly by DART and Trinity Metro, TRE is an example of how transit agencies can work together to provide connections that cross traditional city, county and transit authority boundaries.

TRE also serves as an important connection point within the region's larger transit network. Riders can connect to DART's light rail system in Dallas and Trinity Metro services in Fort Worth, making it possible to reach destinations across North Texas without making the entire trip by car. For more information, visit <https://trinityrailwayexpress.org>.

Denton County Transportation Authority's A-train

Debuting in 2011, Denton County Transportation Authority's (DCTA) A-train extended regional rail service northward. Operating along a 21-mile corridor, the A-train connects Denton County communities such as Denton and Lewisville with Carrollton, where riders

can transfer to DART's Green Line and continue to destinations throughout Dallas, including downtown and Fair Park.

In addition to serving daily commuters, the line benefits students who live and attend school in the area. Through transit connections and the agency's University Pass Program, the A-train helps students, faculty and staff at schools such as the University of North Texas connect to the broader regional transportation network.

The A-train also demonstrates the importance of connections between local and regional transit services. By linking Denton County with DART's light rail network, the line gives riders access to destinations beyond the communities directly served by the A-train.

For the NCTCOG Transportation Department, connections such as these are an important part of regional transportation planning. As North Texas continues to grow, coordination among transit providers can help create a system that works across traditional geographic boundaries. For more information, visit DCTA's [A-train webpage](#).

TEXRail

Launched by Trinity Metro in 2019, this 27-mile line established a rail connection between Fort Worth, northern Tarrant County communities and DFW Airport. Running from downtown Fort Worth's T&P Station through North Richland Hills and Grapevine, TEXRail provides direct service to DFW Airport's Terminal B, giving travelers another option for reaching the airport without driving.

In addition to connecting Fort Worth with the airport, TEXRail provides service to growing communities in northern Tarrant County and connects with other Trinity Metro services along the way. Its airport connection also makes it an important part of the region's multimodal transportation network, linking air travel with regional rail and local transit.

TEXRail's continued development reflects the broader growth of North Texas and the need for transportation options that connect residents with major employment centers, educational institutions, medical facilities and other regional destinations. To learn more, visit [TEXRail's information webpage](#).

Connections

Regional rail in North Texas has grown far beyond simple commuter service. Together with local transit services, the region's rail lines help connect communities with major employment centers, colleges, medical facilities, entertainment venues and airports.

By linking communities across county and city boundaries, regional rail gives residents another way to travel throughout North Texas. Whether heading to a concert or sporting

event at American Airlines Center or commuting to a job across the region, riders can use the interconnected transit system to reach destinations without relying solely on a personal vehicle.

Traveling to and from DFW Airport has also become more convenient with the addition of direct rail service. Both TEXRail and the DART Silver Line provide service to Terminal B, connecting the airport with communities throughout the region. (Passengers can also access DFW Airport by light rail via DART's Orange Line.)

Regional rail also plays an important role when large crowds descend on North Texas for festivals, concerts and sporting events. During the FIFA World Cup this year, TRE was an important component of NCTCOG's transportation plan. TRE transported fans to CentrePort Station, where match attendees could connect with dedicated shuttle buses traveling to AT&T Stadium, where FIFA matches were held.

The World Cup is a major example of how regional transportation agencies and other partners can coordinate to move large numbers of people efficiently.

The Future

As regional rail continues to grow, local transit agencies and the NCTCOG Transportation Department are looking at ways to expand service and strengthen connections across the region. Continued coordination among transit providers will be important as North Texas grows and transportation needs evolve.

In Fort Worth, Trinity Metro is moving forward with a 2.1-mile extension that will extend TEXRail south from T&P Station into the Medical District and Near Southside area. The project will add another connection between the area's medical campuses and the regional rail network.

On a broader regional scale, NCTCOG continues to work on its Regional Transit 2.0 initiative. The effort brings together local leaders and the region's primary transit providers - DART, Trinity Metro and DCTA - to explore opportunities for greater coordination.

For the NCTCOG Transportation Department, projects such as the Silver Line demonstrate the value of regional cooperation and long-term transportation planning as North Texas continues to grow. As more communities become connected by rail, the region's transit network can continue evolving to meet the needs of the people who live, work and travel here.