

## No Traffic Woes Where DART Goes

by Richard A. Solomon

Like vast numbers of North Texans, I love my car, but I hate our metroplex traffic.

So a year ago, when my work as a public relations and advertising consultant started taking me outside Plano - to Uptown and downtown Dallas and to the heart of Fort Worth - I decided to stop banging my head against the wall, actually against THE ROADS, which were usually Central Expressway, city streets and the occasional tollway, turnpike and interstate.

Instead, I hopped a train; and, a bus; and a 100 year-old streetcar!

As a result, I'm happier, more relaxed and less stressed. Given the cost of gasoline, maintenance, parking and tolls - I'm not only doing something green for the environment by helping our air quality and saving fuel, but I'm pocketing more green.

Surely, taking even one car off the road makes life a little easier for other commuters and the planet. Dallas Area Rapid Transit's (DART) Parker Road Station is located on Archerwood Street in Plano, just east of Central Expressway and south of Parker Road. It's easy to reach, and parking is free. (Beginning April 2, residents of cities which don't belong to DART will begin paying to park in this lot and the lot at the North Carrollton/Frankford Station on the Green Line).

Red Line light-rail service is convenient when I'm traveling to points south, and along much of the route I can even watch drivers on Central Expressway as they crawl along. Ouch! I've taken the Red Line train to Lovers Lane Station and walked mere steps to the Meadows Building. I've traveled downtown to St. Paul Station and walked half a block to work with clients at Bryan and Harwood. When Uptown calls, I can take the Red Line south and grab a DART bus at either the station at Mockingbird or Cityplace. I can hop a nostalgic trolley, like the ones my grandparents rode on the streets of Dallas, on the McKinney Avenue Transit Authority's free M-Line. The cost of a DART local day pass is \$4...hmmm, how much is gas per gallon these days? A local monthly pass is \$65 and is your ticket to ride throughout Dallas to many local attractions from the American Airlines Center to the Dallas Zoo.

When it's time to visit Cowtown, the Red Line takes me to Union Station. I board the heavy-rail Trinity Railway Express (TRE) which takes me through Irving and the Mid-Cities area to a final destination in downtown Fort Worth. Amtrak trains and buses (operated by what locals refer to as "The T") meet the train at the Intermodal Transportation Center. I stop there for bus service in bad weather, but when the weather's good I stay on the train to the T&P Station, located along Interstate 30 and a short ¼ mile walk to the office.

No matter the destination, using mass transit gives me the opportunity to relax or read, sightsee or talk to other passengers. And the TRE's trains are so roomy I can break out my laptop computer and get a head start on work.

Our mass transit services provide good, practical alternatives to driving and fighting the Metroplex's legendary, infamous traffic. I recommend giving the trains, buses and trolleys a try.

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