



Ⓞ Denton County transit agency to hold meetings on raising regional fares

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Denton County Transportation Authority officials have celebrated recent improvements in ridership numbers, but soon they plan to unveil proposed rate changes that the public may not cheer.

Public meetings in October will discuss raising prices for regional monthly, annual and reduced-fare passes.

The goal would be to align DCTA fares with those of its regional partners — Dallas Area Rapid Transit and the Fort Worth Transportation Authority (“the T”), both of which proposed a regional rate increase. If approved, the changes would take effect Jan. 14.

“Our concern about any type of fare increase [is] we’re a new system [and] we didn’t feel like now is the time to raise fares,” said Dee Leggett, vice president of communications and planning for DCTA. “Our hands are somewhat tied with the regional system because there are three of us involved.”

Leggett said there are pros and cons to the regional partnership with DART and the T.

A major benefit is seamless connectivity. But a notable disadvantage is that DCTA is tied to fares proposed by its bigger partners.

The three agencies have a reciprocal fare structure, so the fares need to be the same for all three.

Leggett said officials will use other means to encourage users to ride the A-train, including during off-peak hours, when officials are considering lowering the cost of riding the rail line.

Another idea is to reduce prices for the local university system pass program.

“Hopefully, if there is ridership lost due to an increase in the regional fare, we will offset the cost by making the local option more attractive,” Leggett said.

DCTA officials also extended the fare boundary to the Trinity Mills station in Carrollton. Anyone traveling beyond that station would require a regional pass.

Also, Leggett said, the agency is looking into the idea of bulk passes for corporations to provide to employees and for nonprofits or special groups.

Paul Pomeroy, board treasurer and Highland Village’s representative to DCTA, said the prospect of a fare increase is not new to the board and has been considered over recent weeks, with staff from both DCTA and DART communicating and providing input. Despite that, DART is moving forward with the regional fare increases.

“What our staff has done is looked at how that impacts our overall fare structure and seen if we can leave our local fares the same. They will present us a package of all that at the board meeting Thursday,” Pomeroy said. “It is our intention to be — I don’t know if conservative is the right word — to do as little as possible but be cognizant of our own cost structure and what DART is doing.”

It will be hard to determine the impact of fare increases until DCTA receives input from the public at the meetings, Pomeroy said.

Meetings will be Oct. 8 in Lewisville, Oct. 10 in Highland Village and Oct. 11 in Denton.

DCTA officials value the public’s input, Leggett said.

“It has always been part of the process and will be included in their decision-making,” she said.

IF YOU GO: Public meeting schedule

LEWISVILLE

When: 7 p.m. Oct. 8

Where: Lewisville Municipal Annex, 1197 W. Main St.

HIGHLAND VILLAGE

When: 7 p.m. Oct. 10

Where: Highland Village City Council chamber, 1000 Highland Village Road

DENTON

When: 7 p.m. Oct. 11

Where: Downtown Denton Transit Center, 604 E. Hickory Street