



## DART fare increases begin Monday

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Most DART passengers will start paying higher fares Monday, as the agency raises its ticket prices to account for a larger system and increased rail capacity.

Most local bus and train fares — everything from day trips to yearly passes — will increase by about 25 percent. On some fares, the hikes are steeper. And companies that purchase discount passes for their employees will pay nearly twice as much.

The changes are expected to increase annual revenue by up to \$4.5 million.

While riders aren't particularly thrilled, Dallas Area Rapid Transit officials predict that a streamlined fare structure — along with new, cost-effective ticket options — will keep ridership steady.

"We've created a couple of capabilities ... that are better than what we offered previously," said David Leininger, DART's executive vice president and chief financial officer. "So we know we will lose some ridership, but we know we'll pick up some people, too."

DART typically adjusts fares every five years, although the cycle was broken in 2009 when the agency raised fares to combat the effects of a struggling economy. There's added urgency this year because of the additional rail the agency has built of late.

Two new stations — North Lake College and Belt Line in Irving — open Monday on the Orange Line. Also Monday, the Blue Line starts service to downtown Rowlett. All that means additional operating costs for DART.

"The incremental costs have gone up," Leininger said.

The higher prices are the changes most likely to be noticed by passengers. The cheapest day pass, for instance, now costs \$5 instead of \$4.

Paul Stockard, an IT manager who rides the train between Fort Worth and Dallas every day, said last week that he wasn't happy about the new fares. "It's less money in my pocket," Stockard, 49, said. "But at this point, it's still more economical than driving."

DART officials hope the overhaul will improve the experience for some riders, as there are several additional changes to the fare structure:

Fare classes have been consolidated from three — local, system and regional — to two, combining local and system.

Colleges, universities and trade schools have more flexibility in buying discount passes for their students. Higher-education students will now also have the option to independently purchase half-price passes.

The single-ride fare has been replaced by a two-hour pass, which allows transfers between bus and rail. The cheapest two-hour pass will cost \$2.50, compared with \$1.75 for the old single-ride ticket.

DART is introducing a five-hour midday pass — good only on weekdays, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. — for \$1.75. The five-hour pass also allows transfers between bus and rail.

DART officials are counting on the last two options, in particular, to be popular.

The two-hour pass could prove more economical for quick trips, although some riders were skeptical that it would provide enough time to get errands completed. And the five-hour ticket could help build upon an already robust midday bus ridership, Leininger said.

"It will take some time for customers to fully understand the two-hour and five-hour passes because both of those are different products," he said. "But it's a good value ... and it's simple to use."

For full details about the fare changes, go to [www.dart.org/2012farechange](http://www.dart.org/2012farechange).

Follow Tom Benning on Twitter at [@tombenning](https://twitter.com/tombenning).

### New DART fares

Category	System	Regional
2-hour pass	\$2.50	\$5
Day pass	\$5	\$10
7-day pass	\$25	\$50
Monthly pass	\$80	\$160

Annual pass	\$800	\$1,600
Midday 5-hour pass*	\$1.75	\$3.50
Corporate	\$600	\$1,200

\*These passes would be valid between 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday only.

SYSTEM — Good on all DART trains and buses, including FLEX and DART On-Call, Trinity Railway Express between Union Station and CentrePort/DFW Airport Station

REGIONAL — Good on all DART trains and buses, including FLEX and DART On-Call, Trinity Railway Express, the T in Fort Worth, and Denton County Transportation Authority trains and buses

