

html

# Star-Telegram

## Vote could be start of transit system for all of DFW

Posted Tuesday, Mar. 05, 2013

BY BUD KENNEDY

[bud@star-telegram.com](mailto:bud@star-telegram.com)

A single regionwide bus and rail system is closer then ever.

Can more Dallas-and-Fort Worth teamwork be far behind?

Separated by a 30-minute drive but light-years in attitude, Fort Worth and Dallas have begun to talk lately about sharing more than an airport -- not only to save money but also to make money.



The Dallas Area Rapid Transit board's vote Tuesday to consider selling bus service to Arlington might eventually pave the way for what we now know Tarrant County desperately needs: a regional transit system tying both counties seamlessly together.

If Fort Worth and Arlington aren't an easy ride from Dallas, then future Super Bowls, conventions and a possible Olympic Games will bypass our cities completely or -- like the Final Four basketball championships next year -- rely on connected Dallas sites and bus to Arlington only for the stadium event.

Sure, we share the Trinity Railway Express and plans for TEX Rail. But that's not enough.

If Tarrant County leaders haven't already gotten the message that we've been left behind, it's as plain as the new signs at Dallas/Fort Worth Airport.

Giant signs on the luggage carousels point "To DART" -- "New DART Service."

Arriving passengers get directions only to Dallas.

They don't see a way to get to Fort Worth or Arlington.

That isn't the only reason the Fort Worth City Council overhauled the city transit agency, but it's definitely one reason the T's legacy bus-company mindset had to give way to rail-minded leadership.

DART opened a door to regional partnership last year by selling contract express bus service to Mesquite, charging the city a flat \$300,000 a year instead of demanding a share of city sales tax.

A possible contract with Arlington would cost \$700,000 for DART service between College Park and the far east Fort Worth CentrePort rail station. Both Mesquite and Arlington would be asked for a sales tax or other long-term commitment later.

Nobody is ready to say whether DART might someday take over Fort Worth's private contract to operate the T. (Fort Worth's current contract is with French-owned McDonald Transit, which has run the local agency for 42 years.)

But a DART deal with Arlington would be a start.

We're already running late.

Bud Kennedy's column appears Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays. 817-390-7538

Twitter: [@budkennedy](https://twitter.com/budkennedy)

[Looking for comments?](#)