**North Texans returning to offices encouraged to #HopOn public transit**

With employers welcoming back their workers to offices, North Texans can ease back into their pre-pandemic routines by leaving the driving to someone else.

The region’s three major transit authorities – Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), the Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) and Trinity Metro – have been providing service throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Early on, they were a lifeline to healthcare, pharmacy, grocery store and other “essential” employees responsible for keeping people healthy and safe.

As the pandemic has evolved, transit providers have continued to serve riders as those riders were ready to come back. Data shows people have been steadily returning to transit, a mode of transportation hit especially hard by the pandemic. Bus and train ridership climbed each quarter last year, and weekday ridership made steady gains throughout 2021 after being down by more than 50% at the outset of the pandemic.

Work schedules are not the same as they were pre-pandemic. Transit providers can serve workers across the region, regardless of their hours. For example, it may be helpful to people doing shift work, running errands after school or traveling to social occasions.

The region’s public transportation providers have maintained strict cleaning protocols to keep customers and employees safe. This is a practice that continues, even as people in North Texas and beyond have begun to resume their pre-pandemic routines.

With gas prices remaining high, now might be a good time for people to board the bus or train again. North Texans may not be able to control gas prices, but they can control how you get around and commute. In addition to saving money by filling the gas tankless, leaving the driving to someone else is less stressful and allows them to use their time more wisely. For some, public transit can be a chance to decompress between a high-stress job and home life. They can get work done while on their way to the office, answer emails or prepare for their day or just relax.

Not only can transit be less stressful than fighting traffic, but it could also improve the health of customers, especially if they walk or bicycle from the transit stop to your destination. Bicycles are permitted on all DART, DCTA and Trinity Metro buses and trains.

Not everyone is back in the office full time, and for some, transit may not be the best commuting option all the time.

They can also choose transit activities outside the workday. Maybe they want to ride transit to a Dallas Mavericks or Dallas Stars game and do so without the stress of having to find a parking place when they get to the American Airlines Center. They can take the Trinity Railway Express or DART light rail.

Additionally, taking TEXRail to Dallas Fort Worth International Airport is an easy way for business and leisure travelers to catch a flight without having to find – and pay for – parking. They can also take DART light rail to Dallas Love Field and connect to the terminal by bus.

Use one of the region’s redesigned bus networks to get to school, a concert, or for a night out with friends. All three transit providers have modified their bus networks to provide more comprehensive, efficient service.

Flexibility is also key coming out of the pandemic. Those who do not live or work next to a transit stop may choose to combine traditional service with on-demand micro-transit options. DART (GoLink) or Trinity Metro (GoZones) and DCTA (Via) all offer on-demand services.

Wherever you need to go in North Texas, leave the driving to someone else and #hopon transit.