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# Briefing and Discussion on DART Member City Negotiations

Transportation & Infrastructure Committee

January 20, 2026

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# Presentation Overview



- **Background**
- **City Manager Working Group Information**
- **Governance Considerations**
- **Service Considerations**
- **Funding Considerations**
- **Next Steps**

# Background

- Some of the 13 member cities have expressed governance, service, and funding concerns to DART. Several cities supported bills in the 89th Texas legislative session which would change DART's governance and/or funding structure.
- Pursuant to Chapter 452 of the Texas Transportation Code, a municipality may withdraw from a regional transit authority such as Dallas Area Rapid Transit only by majority vote at a local election; a city council has no authority to unilaterally withdraw and may only order the election every six years.
- Five cities (Farmers Branch, Highland Park, Irving, Plano, University Park) have called May 2026 elections to consider withdrawal from DART.
- City Manager Tolbert has participated in a City Manager's Working Group since September 2025, in which member cities have discussed how to address issues related to governance, service, and funding.

## Background – Key Developments



### Summer 2024

Transit 2.0 was launched in April 2024 as a regional planning effort led by NCTCOG to develop strategies for transit expansion and coordination through 2050.

Carrollton, Farmers Branch, Highland Park, Irving, Plano, and Rowlett passed resolutions reducing the sales tax to DART from one cent to three quarters of a cent.



### Fall 2024

The Ernst & Young (EY) cost allocation report (measuring contributions vs. services for FY 2023) presented to the DART Board. The study identified seven cities that were "donor cities," contributing more than they receive in service. The study was limited in scope and did not account for all measures of value.



### Spring 2025

Multiple bills filed at the during 89<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature (89<sup>th</sup> Leg) to amend DART's governance and funding structure.

Addison, Dallas, Glenn Heights, Richardson, and Rowlett adopted resolutions affirming support for full DART funding.

DART Board approves two resolutions: GMP for eligible cities and legislative priorities on governance.

## Background – Bills Filed in 89<sup>th</sup> Leg and DART Response

	SB 2118	HB 3187
Type	Governance	Funding
Description	Restructures the DART board so that every city appoints one board member, and any member representing a city above a population of 350,000 would be entitled to 3 votes.	Creates a general mobility program which would allow cities to receive up to 25% of the city's sales and use tax revenue sent to DART, while capping DART's sales and use tax rate at no higher than three-quarters of 1%.  Allows member cities to call withdrawal elections every three years.
Impact to Dallas	Reduces Dallas' DART board representation from ~51% to 20% or less.	Reduces funding available for regional transportation services.
DART Response	March 2025 resolution which would grant each member city one representative on the DART board with a vote weighted based on population.	March 2025 resolution which established a GMP to the seven "donor cities" identified in the 2024 EY Cost Allocation Report. It also institutes a yearly cost allocation report.

## Background – Key Developments



### Summer 2025

89th Legislative session ends with no DART legislation passed. DART governance and funding bills were refiled by member cities during special session.

DART begins Board reapportionment discussions. Member cities receive reapportionment briefing by DART and member cities request that Dallas consider a different governance model.

The RTC accepts Transit 2.0 study but not recommendations and creates a transit subcommittee for next steps on Transit 2.0.



### Fall 2025

DART Board approves the FY26 Budget which includes a 5% GMP

Sept. 4, 2025, Mayors, City Managers and DART leadership, convened by the North Texas Commission and NCTCOG, to begin working group meetings to discuss DART issues.



### Winter 2025

DART Board approves reapportionment with no changes

Five member cities vote to hold a withdrawal election in May 2026.

# Key Concerns Expressed and DART Response

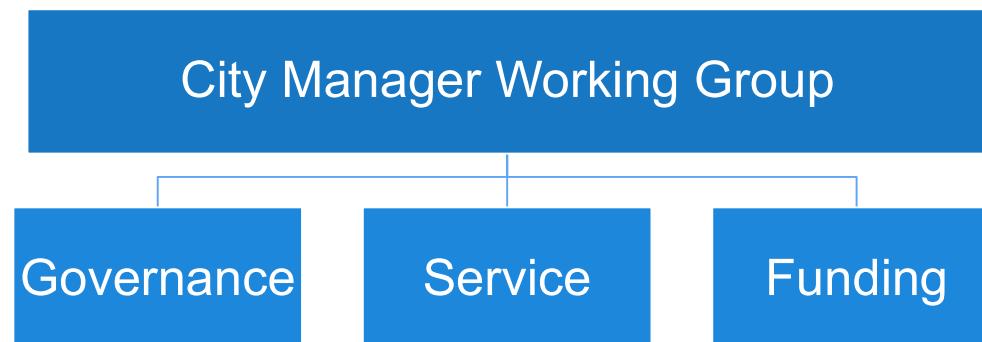
Member City Concern	DART Response to Date
Contribution deltas exist for seven member cities, based on the 2024 EY Cost Allocation Report.	In March 2025, the DART board instituted a General Mobility Program (GMP), which reallocates 5% of DART's annual sales tax revenue to seven "donor cities" identified in the study, conditioned upon agreement to an ILA. This includes conducting yearly Cost Allocation Reports FY26-28. Please see the Appendix for additional details associated with DART's FY26 budget.
Revenue growth for cities capped at 3.5% year-over-year, whereas DART is not limited in the same manner.	In April 2025, the DART Board approved financial standards for the FY 2026 Budget and the 20-Year Financial Plan. The standards include provisions to limit revenue growth (Provisions B1 and B5).
Economic development limitations compared to other cities in the region.	In June 2025, the DART Board approved the framework for an ILA which enables the agency to contribute a percentage of its sales tax to tax increment reinvestment zones (TIRZs) created by its member cities to revitalize certain areas within DART's service area. Staff and DART will brief this item to Economic Development Committee.
DART Board composition gives disproportionate influence to larger cities.	In August 2025, the DART board explored alternative methods for grouping cities within the current apportionment framework. No changes were made, and the board approved its five-year reapportionment plan in November 2025.

# City Manager Working Group

- On September 4, 2025, the North Texas Commission and NCTCOG convened member city mayors and city managers to discuss concerns. From this meeting, a working group of city managers and DART leadership formed to explore governance, service, and funding options. Members include:
  - Dallas
  - Garland
  - Irving
  - Plano
  - Richardson
  - Rowlett
- The group has met a total of seven times through January 15, 2026, and conversations are ongoing. The working group reported its progress to the mayors and city managers of the thirteen member cities on November 13, 2025.
- The working group has not reached a consensus recommendation but has helped identify some areas of alignment, including shared goals.

# Purpose

- Share the framework and considerations broached in the working group to the TRNI committee.



- Receive committee feedback on the governance framework being developed in the working group.

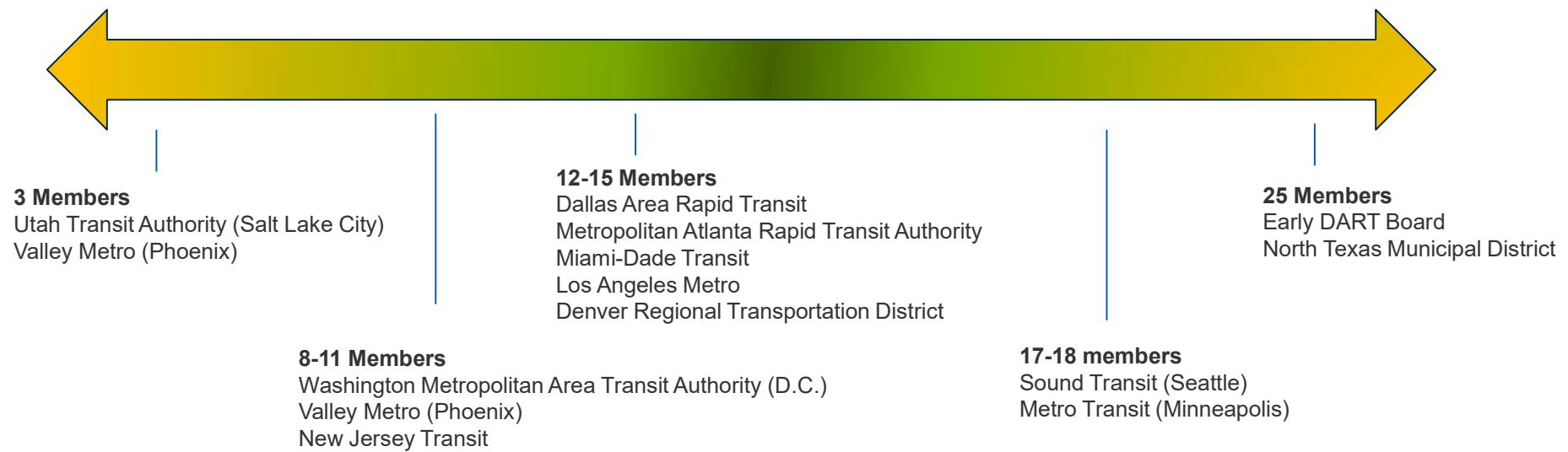
# Governance

## City Manager Working Group – Proposed Governance Shared Goals

- **Stakeholders support DART's success** - exceptional service, increased ridership, transit needed for economic development, regional economic competitiveness.
- **Maintain equitable representation** based on funding, population, employment, and ridership.
- **Provide an effective, accountable, and durable structure** for the next 5-20 years.
- **Encourage growth** and attract new members.
- No one city has a single majority vote. "**One City, One Vote**" is the baseline for representation.
- **Population updates** should be considered every 5 years.

# Board Size: Transit Agency Best Practices

- Peer transit agencies vary in size from 3 members to 17-18 members.
- No direct peer comparison with majority singular city (>50% contribution)



# Working Group: Governance Discussion

City	2025 Population	2045 Population Forecast	Number of Seats with Proportionality	Vote Weight	Percentage of Vote
Addison	17,837	26,620	1	1	4%
Carrollton	136,543	152,892	1	1.5	6%
Cockrell Hill	3,855	3,131	1	1	4%
Dallas	1,385,989	1,510,106	5	10.5	40%
Farmers Branch	40,246	52,245	1	1	4%
Garland	251,932	280,401	2	2	8%
Glenn Heights	19,883	26,185	1	1	4%
Highland Park	8,793	9,005	1	1	4%
Irving	266,162	280,108	2	2	8%
Plano	299,262	318,098	2	2	8%
Richardson	122,745	158,790	1	1.5	6%
Rowlett	67,519	74,448	1	1	4%
University Park	25,574	22,656	1	1	4%
<b>Total Service Area</b>	<b>2,646,340</b>	<b>2,914,685</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>104%</b>

## Working Model: One seat one vote with weighted votes

- Additional member >250,000 population and additional weighing over 100k
- New member cities receive seats based on population, and voting weights would adjust in accordance.
- Work on the table was paused based as Dallas percentage governs



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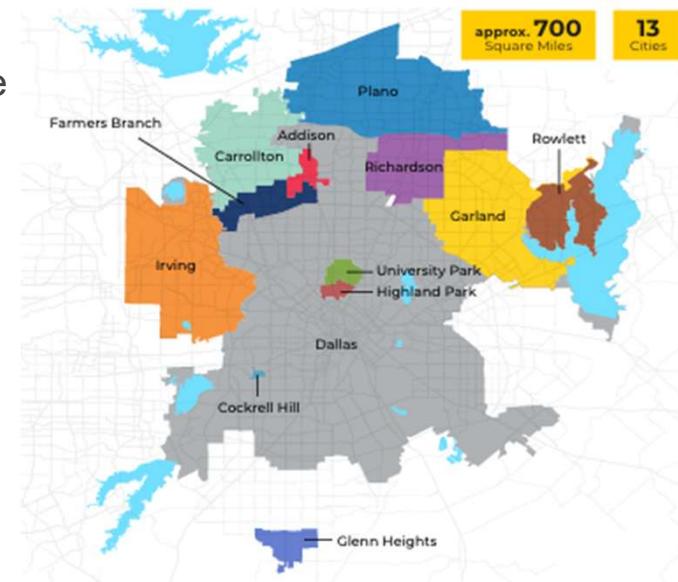
# Service

## City Manager Working Group – Proposed Service Shared Goals

- **Access & Connectivity** – Service should ensure that residents across participating cities have access to reliable connections to jobs, education, health care, and regional destinations. Member cities understand that even if service levels vary by city, the system should function as an interconnected network that strengthens mobility across the entire DART region.
- **Service Design** – The service model should incorporate both fixed-route and flexible solutions (like on-demand micro transit) that adapt to different community densities and rider demand.
- **Efficiency & Performance** – Service levels should be based on measurable outcomes (ridership, coverage, cost-effectiveness) to maximize public benefit per dollar invested.
- **Consistency & Reliability** – Riders should experience predictable schedules, dependable frequency, and safe service regardless of city boundaries.
- **Innovation & Adaptability** – The model should encourage pilot programs, partnerships, and integration with new technologies (apps, mobility hubs, first/last mile solutions) to continually improve service.
- **Regional Connectivity** – Even if service levels vary by city, the system should function as an interconnected network that strengthens mobility across the entire DART region.
- **Safety** – Transit services must prioritize the physical safety and personal security of riders, employees, and the communities they serve. Member cities also support safety around transit stops and stations through design, infrastructure, and community partnerships. Together, these efforts reinforce trust and encourage ridership.

## Current Service Model and Proposed Framework

- DART's service modes include regional commuter rail, light rail, bus service, shuttles (incl. streetcars), and GoLink. Service maps are provided in the appendix.
- Working Group proposed service framework:
  - Prioritizing connectivity, innovation and safety
  - Improve the Area Plan process to better align city needs with DART planning and financial processes
  - Enhance transparency and oversight
  - Strengthen DART communications



# Funding

## City Manager Working Group – Proposed Funding Shared Goals

- **Transparency & Accountability** – All funding allocations, expenditures, and project and service prioritizations must be clear, auditable, and easily communicated to member cities and residents.
- **Shared Responsibility & Regional Benefit** – While individual cities expect local value and regional connectivity, the funding model should also recognize that transit investments contribute to the overall economic competitiveness and mobility of the greater North Texas region. As such, cities and regional stakeholders should actively collaborate and support new revenue options and regional policy that promotes regional equity and participation and allow for transit growth into new areas.
- **Flexibility & Scalability** – The funding approach should allow for adjustments as cities grow, transit needs evolve, and technology changes service delivery. DART and the member cities will work together through area plans to capture the changing needs of a city and advance opportunities to adjust service to meet the changing needs.
- **Sustainability & Predictability** – The model should provide a stable, long-term funding structure that supports planning and stability. DART, member cities, and other regional partners will work together to identify new funding sources that benefit both the transit authority and the members of transit authorities.
- **\*Equity & Fairness** – Funding contributions should be proportionate to the level of service received, ensuring that each member city sees a clear and equitable return on investment. ***\*not final; requires further discussion***

# Current and Proposed Funding Model

- Current Model:
  - State Comptroller collects 1% in local sales tax paid in member cities and provides this funding to DART. That penny is the primary source of revenue for DART (~75% of total revenue).
  - DART service will cease immediately in the case of a successful pullout election, but DART will continue to collect their full one-cent contribution until that city's portion of the debt service is paid.
- Conceptual support for an "X+Y+Z" funding model.
  - **X** = a regional system contribution
  - **Y** = intra-city services selected by each city
  - **Z** = remaining revenue given to cities for Chapter 452 allowable uses
- DART is conducting a forward-looking rate study, with preliminary model results expected January 29, 2026. The rate study will inform the feasibility of the XYZ model.

# Potential Additional Revenue Streams

Type	Source	State Code	Barriers (Low/ Medium/High )	Requires State Legislative Approval?	Considerations
Other	NCTCOG - RTC	N/C	Low	No	Transit Member Communities Policy- transit member cities eligible for funding for transit related transportation improvements. Model (MTC) in San Francisco. <i>RTC approved Transit Development Credits to provide more funding to cities that contribute to transit agencies.</i>
Fee	Regional Mobility Authority/Local Vehicle Registration Fee	TTC Ch 370	High	Not for counties (yes for cities)	Must be formed by counties; special legislation allows select city (including McAllen) to form an authority
Value Capture – Special Assessment	Management Districts	LGC Ch 375	Medium	No	Fund supplemental services, typically related to economic development
Other	State/Federal Grants	N/A	Low	No	Regional collaboration on grants; prioritization of transportation funding for transit-adjacent areas

# Next Steps

- Receive feedback on governance framework from the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.
- Continue leadership in upcoming City Manager Working Group meetings. Two meetings are scheduled in January. The next meeting of Mayors and City Managers is scheduled for February 12, 2026.
- Key Dates
  - February 13, 2026: Last date to call a May 2026 election
  - February 23, 2026: Collin and Denton County finalize ballots
  - February 27, 2026: Dallas County finalizes ballot
  - March 18, 2026: Last date to withdraw an item from the ballot
  - May 2, 2026: Date of spring 2026 general election
  - November 9, 2026: Pre-filing for 90<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature Begins
  - January 12, 2027: 90<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature Begins
- Upcoming City Action
  - Monitor and communicate member city votes to the Mayor and City Council
  - Provide a briefing to City Council at a future date.
  - Develop legislative agenda for 90th Legislative Session



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## Appendix A: Recent Member-City Actions Related to DART Governance

City	Action	Date
<b>Garland</b>	Adopted a resolution calling for modernization of DART's enabling legislation to allow service flexibility, partial membership models, and customized transit aligned with local needs and funding contributions.	July 2025
<b>Richardson, Addison</b>	Proposed a resolution calling for each member city to have a board representative with a weighted vote.	September 2025
<b>Plano</b>	Called a special election for May 2026 on DART membership/withdrawal.	November 2025
<b>Irving</b>	Called a special election for May 2026 on DART membership/withdrawal.	November 2025
<b>Farmers Branch</b>	Called a special election for May 2026 on DART membership/withdrawal.	November 2025
<b>Highland Park</b>	Called a special election for May 2026 on DART membership/withdrawal.	November 2025
<b>Addison</b>	Considered calling a May 2026 withdrawal election but voted not to move forward (4–3).	December 2025
<b>University Park</b>	Called a special election for May 2026 on DART membership/withdrawal.	January 2026
<b>Carrollton</b>	Scheduled to consider a resolution supporting changes to the DART Board governance structure, as discussed by the NTC subcommittee formed to study governance issues.	February 2026

## Appendix B: DART Board Resolution 250027, Governance

In March 2025, the DART Board of Directors approved a formal resolution outlining the agency's legislative priorities on governance in response to bills filed in the 89th Texas Legislative Session.

Component	Description
Board Composition	Composed of 1 member appointed by the governing bodies of the municipalities in the subregional authority, except as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2 members by each governing body with a population greater than 250,000 but less than 499,999.</li><li>• 4 members by each governing body with a population greater than 500,000 but less than 1,099,999.</li><li>• 8 members by a governing body with a population greater than 1.1 million</li><li>• Bans sitting city officials (e.g., mayors or councilmembers) from serving on the DART board.</li></ul> Explicitly supports the principle that board members' primary duty is to DART, not to the cities that appoint them.
Terms of Office	Board members would serve staggered two-year terms, with about half expiring each year.
Voting Formula and Requirements	Proportional voting system tied to municipal population, rather than equal votes per city. Calls for supermajority votes (not simple majorities) for major service expansions and debt issuance.
Presiding Officer Rules	Opposes legislation that would limit the board's ability to elect its own Presiding Officer. A new rule establishing that the board's presiding officer (chair) would rotate among board members, in an order the board decides. Each presiding officer's term would last two years, and no one could serve consecutive terms.

# Appendix B: DART Resolution 250025, FY26 GMP

## EXHIBIT 1

### FY 2026 General Mobility Program Allocations (\$M) based on FY 2023 EY Study and 5% of FY 2024 Actual Sales Tax

City	Total Cost Allocation FY 2023 (EY)	FY 2023 Sales tax contribution (EY)	Over/ (Under) (EY)	FY 2023 TRIP Allocation Adjustment	Revised Over/ (Under)	Revised Share of Total Over	Proportional Revenue Share	25% of FY 2024 sales tax (maximum amount)	Allocation for FY 2026
Addison	\$9.5	\$16.3	\$6.8		\$6.8	6.9%	\$2.93	\$4.18	\$2.93
Carrollton	\$37.3	\$48.3	\$11		\$11	11.1%	\$4.74	\$11.91	\$4.74
Cockrell Hill	\$2.8	\$0.6	\$(2.2)	\$(0.13)	\$(2.33)				
Dallas	\$690.5	\$407.8	\$(282.7)		\$(282.7)				
Farmers Branch	\$20.8	\$24.3	\$3.5		\$3.5	3.5%	\$1.51	\$5.88	\$1.51
Garland	\$62.7	\$45.2	\$(17.5)		\$(17.5)				
Glenn Heights	\$1.5	\$1.1	\$(0.4)	\$(0.23)	\$(0.63)				
Highland Park	\$1.9	\$6.3	\$4.4	\$(1.33)	\$3.07	3.1%	\$1.33	\$2.11	\$1.33
Irving	\$123.5	\$102.2	\$(21.3)		\$(21.3)				
Plano	\$44.6	\$109.6	\$65		\$65	65.8%	\$28.01	\$28.99	\$28.01
Richardson	\$50.7	\$56.9	\$6.2		\$6.2	6.3%	\$2.67	\$12.99	\$2.67
Rowlett	\$16.1	\$9.2	\$(6.9)		\$(6.9)				
University Park	\$1.8	\$6.4	\$4.6	\$(1.35)	\$3.25	3.3%	\$1.40	\$1.71	\$1.40
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,063.7</b>	<b>\$834.2</b>							

## Appendix C: Current Board Structure

- DART Board members are appointed by the City Council of the city/cities they represent. There are currently no formal requirements for service on the DART Board.
- The current board structure (15 members) has seats allocated proportionally to population.
- Dallas holds 7 whole seats; Garland, Irving, and Plano each hold one. The other five seats are divided proportionally between the remaining cities based on population, with Dallas sharing an 8th seat with Cockrell Hill.
- Texas Transportation Code requires Board reapportionment every five years based on population changes. The most recent reapportionment discussions began in June 2025, and the reapportionment was approved by the DART Board in November 2025.
- The governance structure is important to membership retention, membership recruitment, funding, service delivery, and long-term system stability.

# Appendix C: Current Board Structure

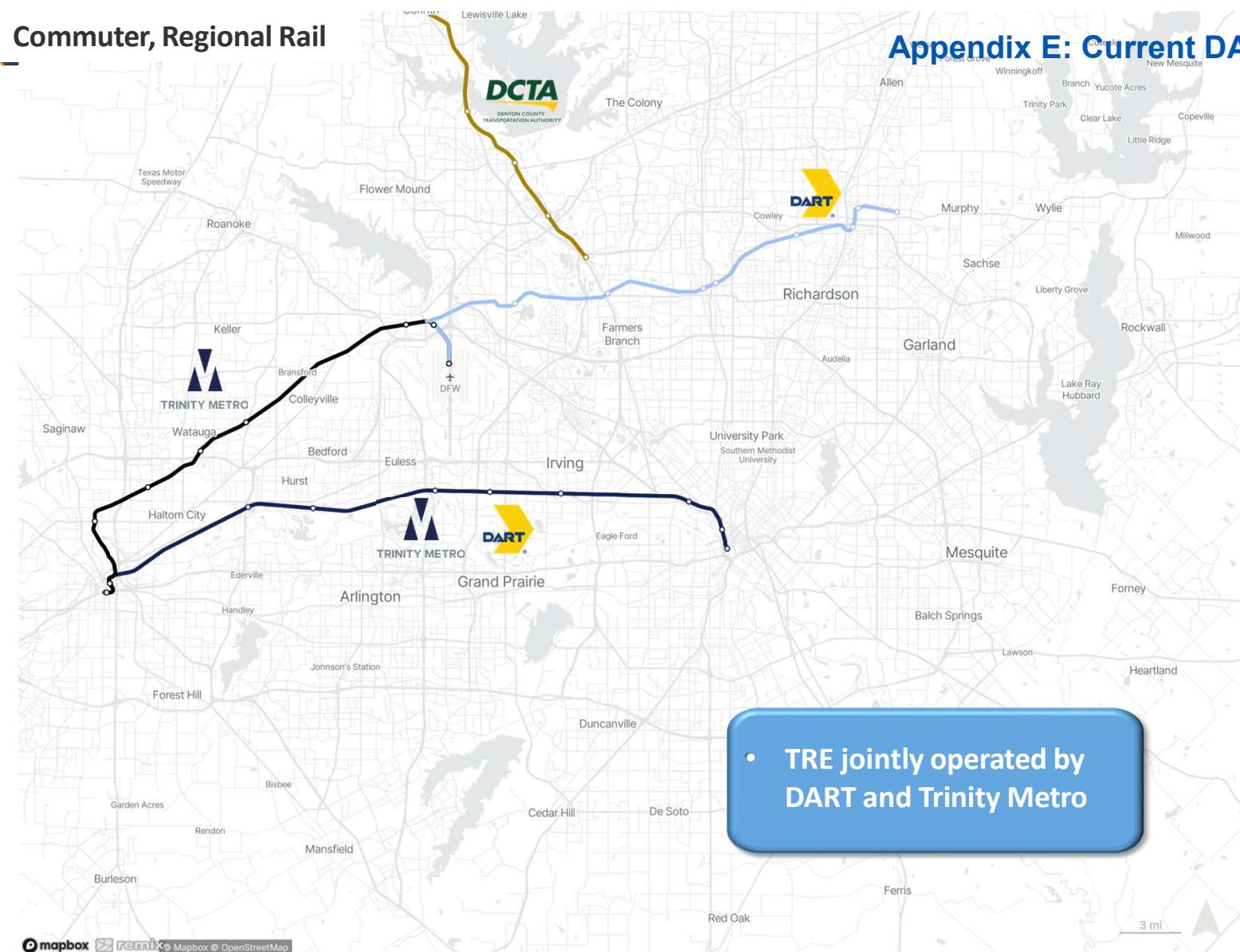
City	Representatives (Year Appointed)
<b>Dallas</b> (Seven plus one shared)	Randall Bryant (2024) Carmen Garcia (2022) Michele Wong Krause (2014) Patrick J. Kennedy (2016) Roy Lopez (2025) Enrique MacGregor [partial with <b>Cockrell Hill</b> ] (2023) Maureen Milligan (2025) Maurice A. West (2025)
<b>Plano</b> (One plus one shared)	Nathan Barbera [partial with <b>Farmers Branch</b> ] (2022) Anthony Ricciardelli (2025)
<b>Irving</b> (One plus one shared)	Richard H. Stopfer (2013) Doug Hrbacek [partial with <b>Carrollton</b> ] (2019)
<b>Garland</b> (One plus one shared)	Marc C. Abraham (2023) Mark C. Enoch [partial with <b>Glenn Heights</b> and <b>Rowlett</b> ] (1997)
<b>Richardson</b> (one shared) <b>Addison</b> (one shared) <b>University Park</b> (one shared) <b>Highland Park</b> (one shared)	Gary A. Slagel (2011)

## Appendix D: DART Member City Comparisons

City	2025 Population	% Of Total Population	Seat Apportionment	Sales Tax Collections (FY24)	Sales Tax (%)	Land Area (Sq. Mi.)
<b>Addison</b>	17,837	0.7%	0.1	\$16,721,355	2.0%	4.36
<b>Carrollton</b>	136,543	5.2%	0.77	\$47,657,473	5.6%	36.66
<b>Cockrell Hill</b>	3,855	0.1%	0.02	\$602,656	0.1%	0.58
<b>Dallas</b>	1,385,989	52.4%	7.86	\$423,239,148	49.7%	339.6
<b>Farmers Branch</b>	40,246	1.5%	0.23	\$23,509,257	2.8%	11.88
<b>Garland</b>	251,932	9.5%	1.43	\$42,983,298	5.0%	57.13
<b>Glenn Heights</b>	19,883	0.8%	0.11	\$1,230,179	0.1%	7.21
<b>Highland Park</b>	8,793	0.3%	0.05	\$8,440,615	1.0%	2.24
<b>Irving</b>	266,162	10.01%	1.51	\$103,130,123	12.1%	66.98
<b>Plano</b>	299,262	11.3%	1.70	\$115,971,059	13.6%	71.69
<b>Richardson</b>	122,745	4.6%	0.70	\$51,970,249	6.1%	28.57
<b>Rowlett</b>	67,519	2.6%	0.38	\$9,477,524	1.1%	20.75
<b>University Park</b>	25,574	1.0%	0.12	\$6,850,694	0.8%	3.69
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,646,340</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>\$851,783,631</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>651.34</b>

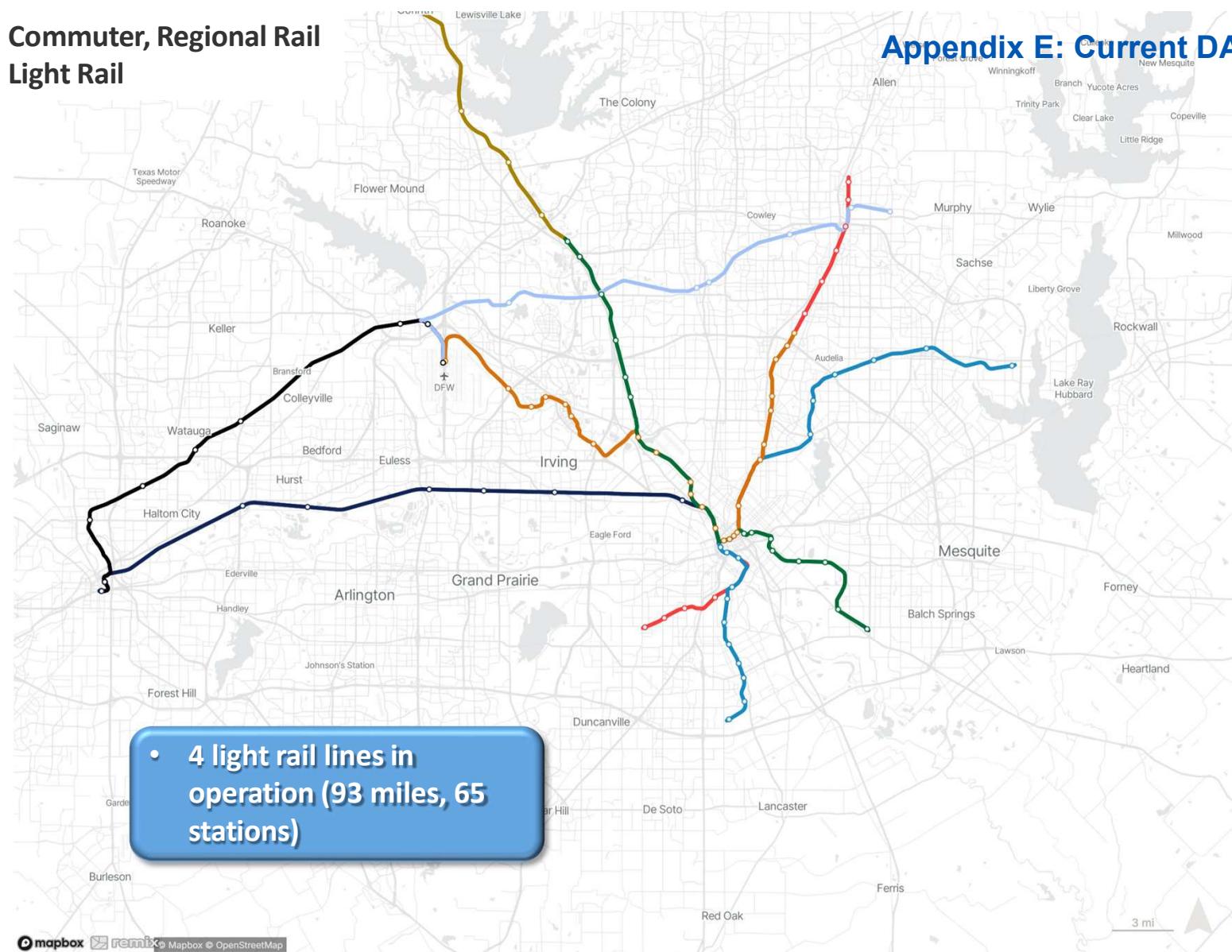
## Commuter, Regional Rail

Appendix E: Current DART Service



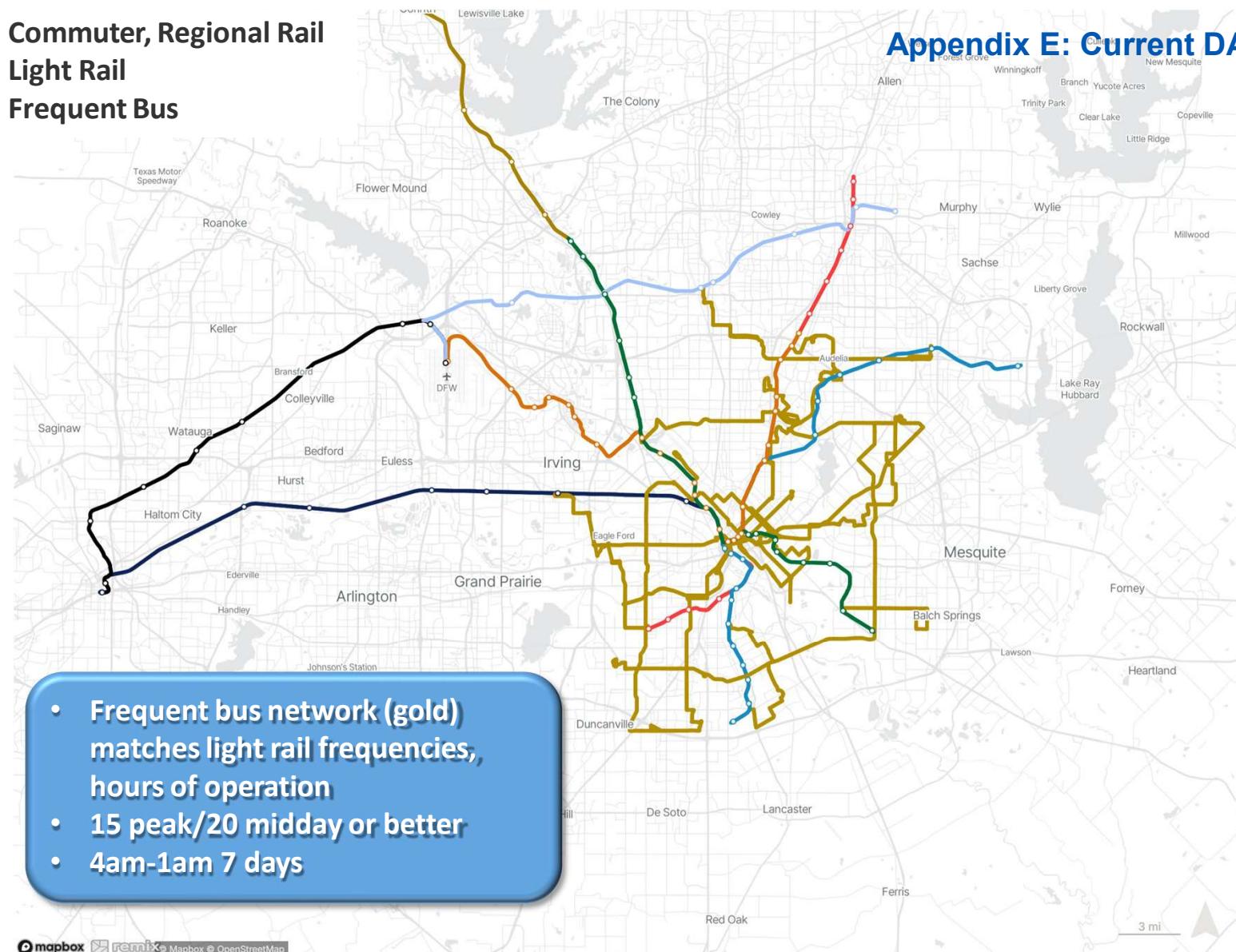
## Commuter, Regional Rail Light Rail

## Appendix E: Current DART Service



## Commuter, Regional Rail Light Rail Frequent Bus

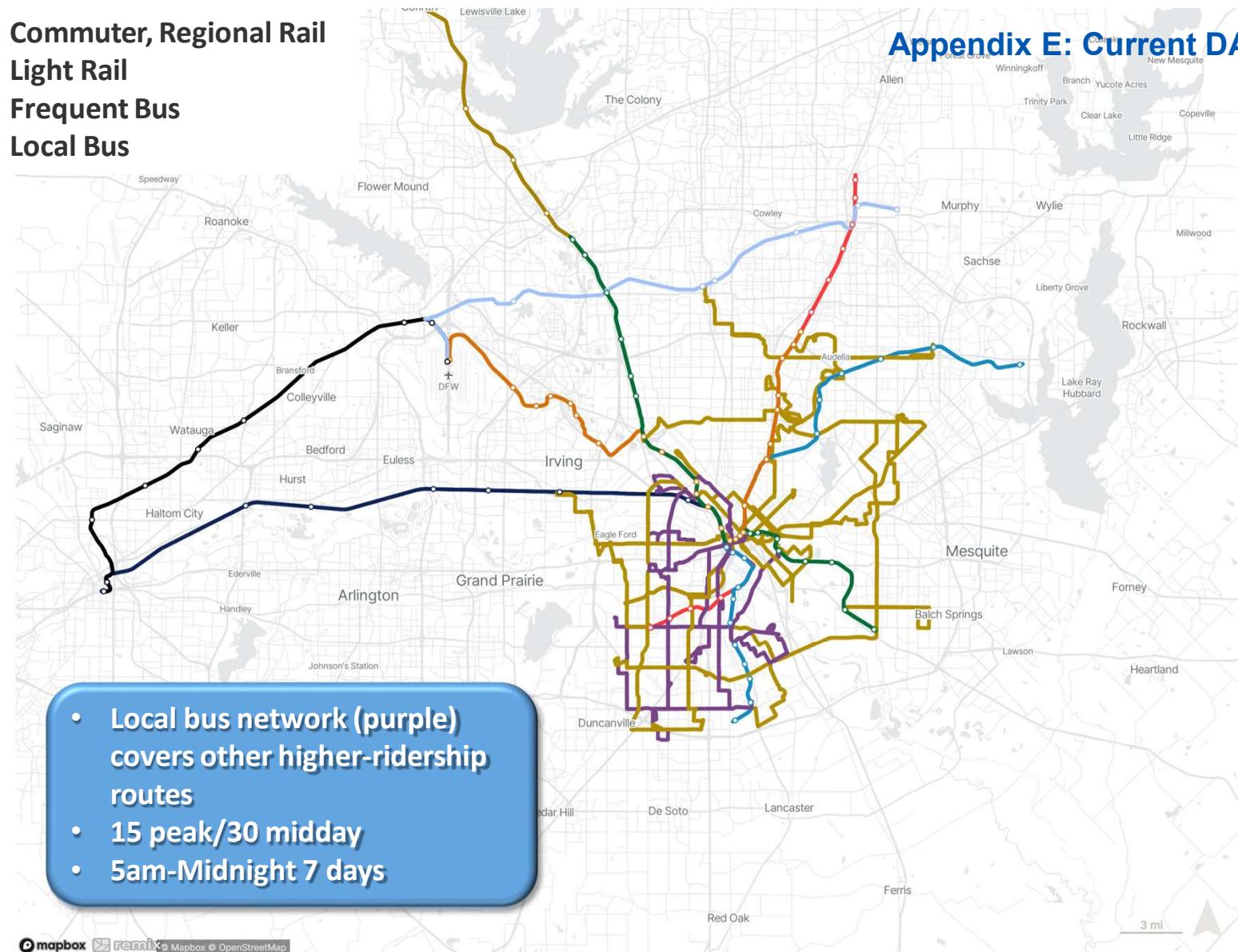
## Appendix E: Current DART Service



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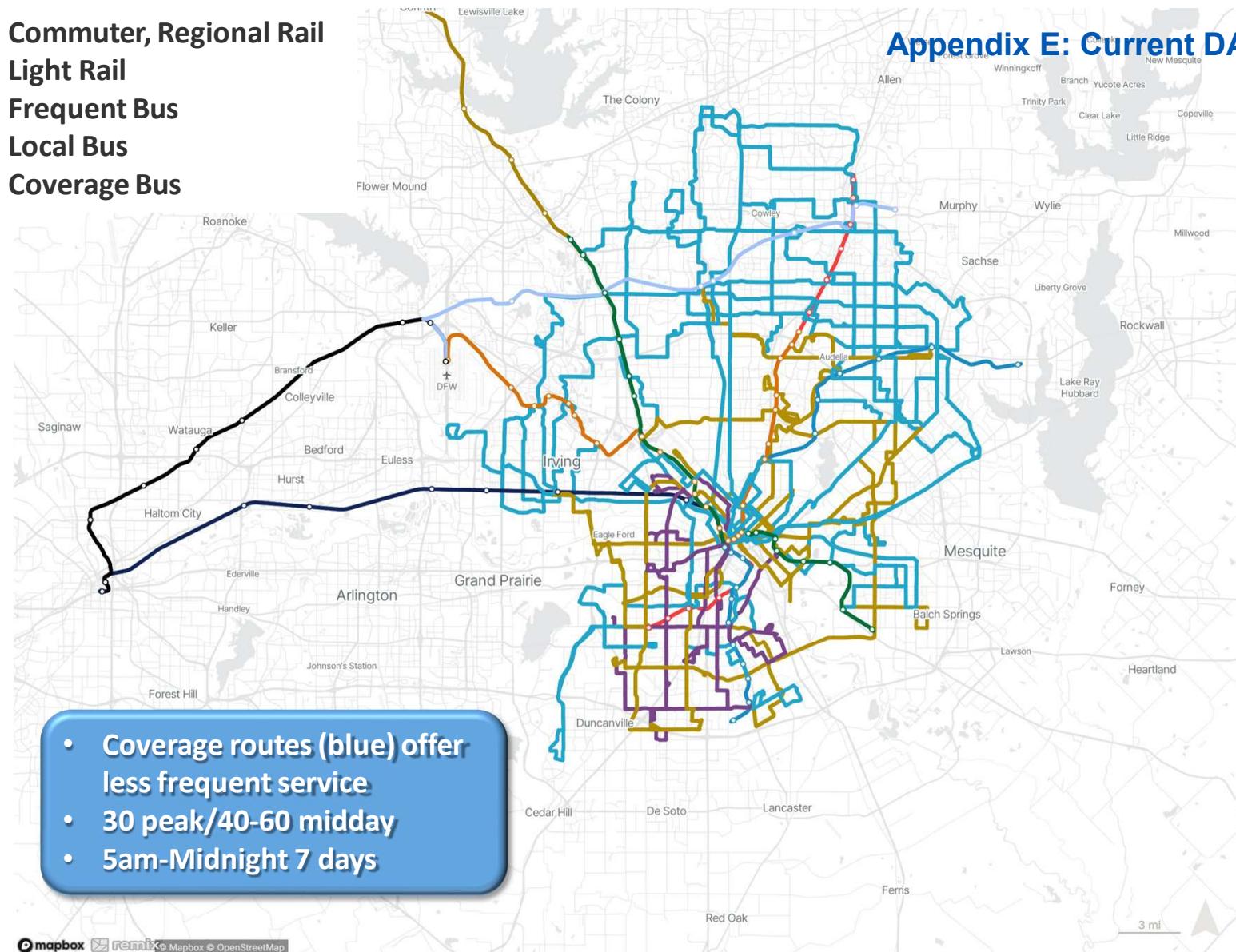
**Commuter, Regional Rail  
Light Rail  
Frequent Bus  
Local Bus**

**Appendix E: Current DART Service**



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**Commuter, Regional Rail  
Light Rail  
Frequent Bus  
Local Bus  
Coverage Bus**

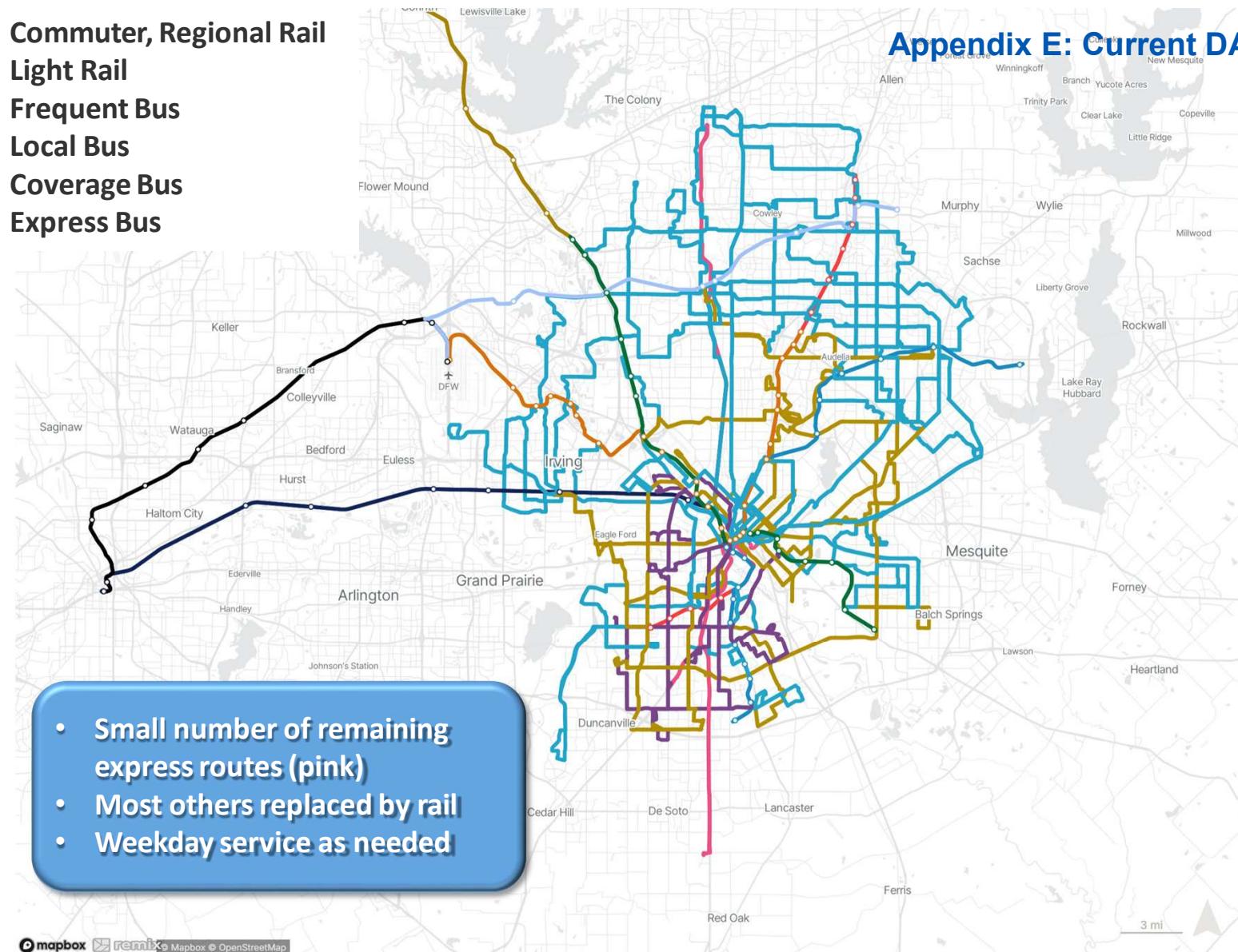


**Appendix E: Current DART Service**

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**Commuter, Regional Rail**  
**Light Rail**  
**Frequent Bus**  
**Local Bus**  
**Coverage Bus**  
**Express Bus**

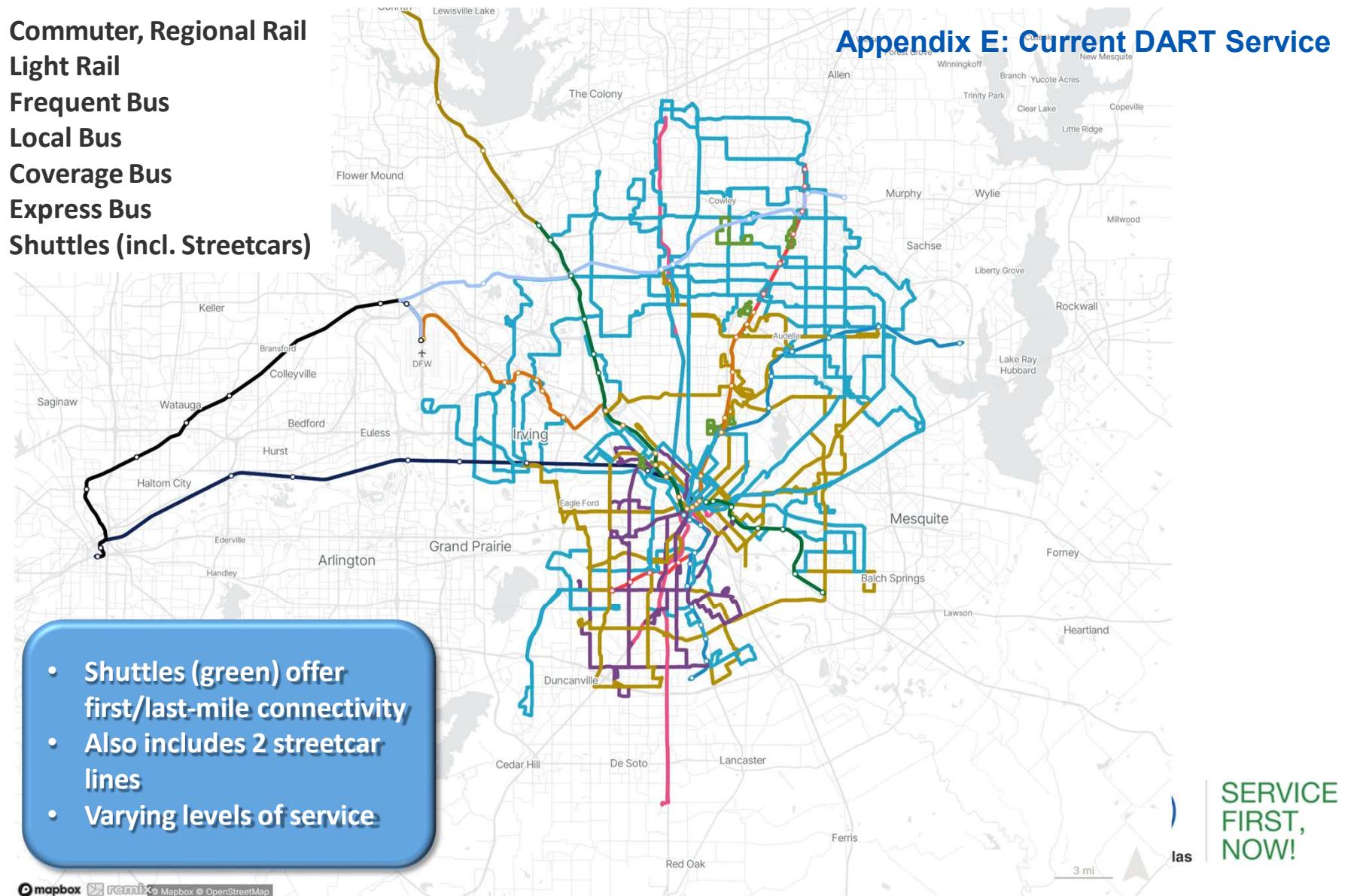
## Appendix E: Current DART Service



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**Commuter, Regional Rail**  
**Light Rail**  
**Frequent Bus**  
**Local Bus**  
**Coverage Bus**  
**Express Bus**  
**Shuttles (incl. Streetcars)**

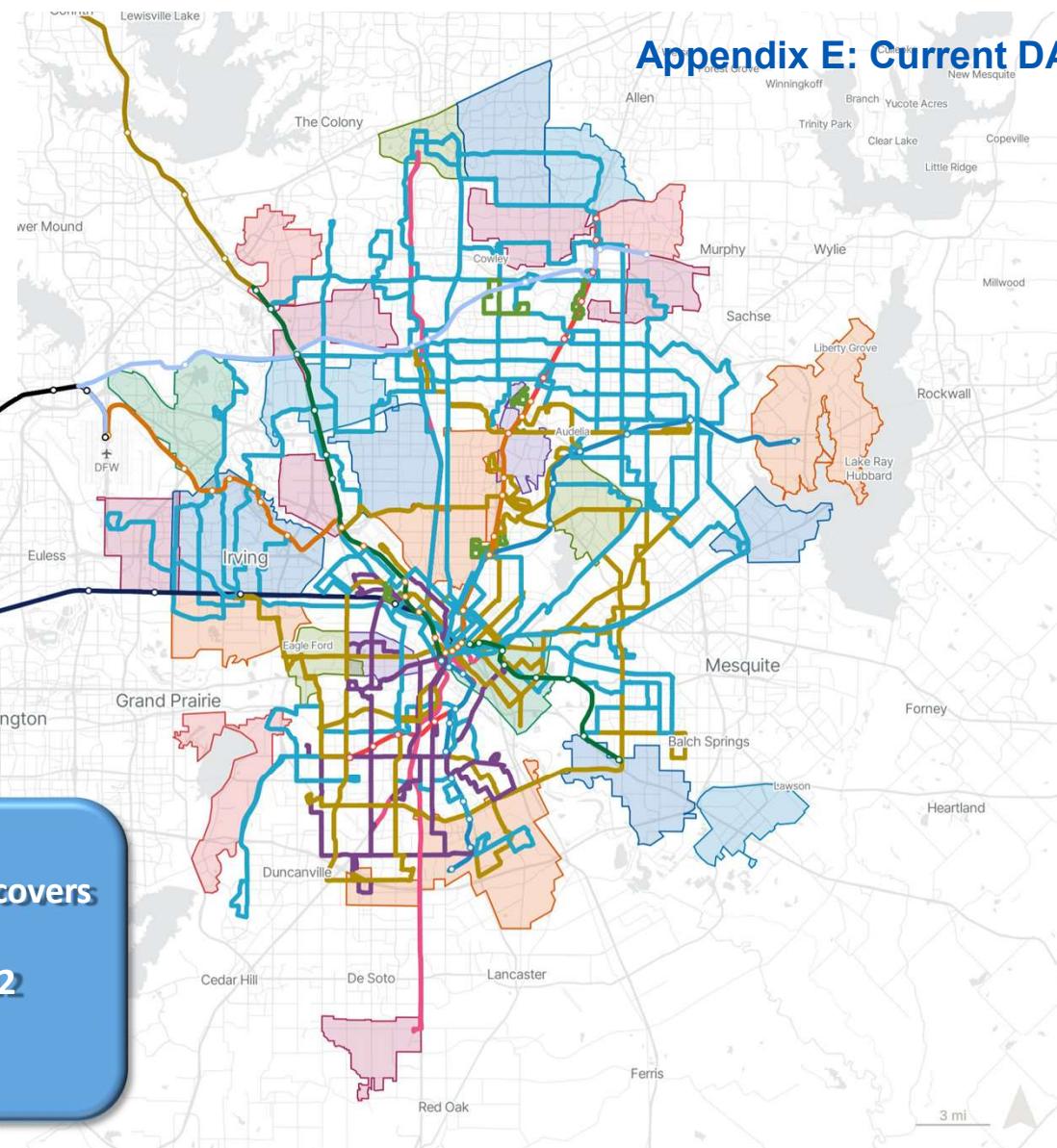
## Appendix E: Current DART Service



Commuter, Regional Rail  
Light Rail  
Frequent Bus  
Local Bus  
Coverage Bus  
Express Bus  
Shuttles (incl. Streetcars)  
GoLink



## Appendix E: Current DART Service



- GoLink microtransit covers everything else
- Total area served: 312 square miles