



Public Transportation & DART Services Survey Summary Report

The Plano Chamber of Commerce conducted a survey of member employers to understand business perspectives on potential changes to public transportation services due to the City of Plano's possible withdrawal from DART. The purpose of this survey was to evaluate impacts on workforce access, business operations, and Plano's long-term economic competitiveness.

Survey Overview

- Total respondents: **54 businesses**
- Respondent mix: **small, mid-sized, and large employers**
- Focus areas:
 - Workforce recruitment and retention
 - Business operations and customer access
 - Economic competitiveness and community reputation
 - Employer transportation benefits
 - Overall support or opposition to DART withdrawal

Key Findings

Workforce Recruitment & Retention

Over 65% of respondents indicated that withdrawing from DART would have a moderate to significant negative impact on their ability to recruit and retain employees. Employers emphasized the importance of transit for entry-level workers, interns, service-sector employees, and individuals without access to reliable transportation.

Business Operations & Customer Accessibility

Businesses reported some potential reductions in employee reliability, customer access challenges, and increased operational costs should transit services be reduced.

Economic Competitiveness & City Reputation

Respondents expressed strong concern that withdrawal from DART could negatively impact Plano's reputation as a connected, business-friendly city and reduce competitiveness in attracting new employers.

Employer-Provided Transit Benefits

Approximately 20% of respondents provide transportation incentives or DART passes, while 80% do not. Despite this, many employers noted that regional transit access remains critical regardless of direct subsidies.

Potential DART Withdrawal

- Oppose Withdrawal: approximately 60%
- Support Withdrawal: approximately 25%
- Unsure or need more information: 15%

A majority of respondents do not support withdrawal under current conditions, with many favoring reform or service improvement over elimination. However, the data and open responses seem to indicate that many of the core issues are either unknown or misunderstood by respondents.

Common Themes from Open-Ended Responses

- Workforce access is a primary concern
- Regional connectivity supports economic growth
- Employers prefer service improvements rather than full withdrawal
- Transportation infrastructure influences corporate relocation decisions

Conclusion

Survey results indicate that public transportation plays a meaningful role in Plano's workforce ecosystem and business climate. While employers acknowledge challenges with existing services, most view continued regional connectivity as essential to workforce availability, economic competitiveness, and long-term community growth. These findings underscore the importance of thoughtful, data-driven decision-making regarding Plano's transportation future.

Key Takeaways for Decision-Makers

- Transportation policy is fundamentally a **workforce policy**
- Changes to transit service have real implications for:
 - Labor availability
 - Economic development
 - Business growth
- **Employers value** regional connectivity, predictability, and long-term competitiveness over short-term cost savings.

DETAILED RESULTS

Question 1:

How would withdrawing from DART affect your ability to recruit and retain employees who rely on transit?

Results

- Significant negative impact: ~41%
- Moderate impact: ~24%
- Little or no impact: ~35%

Key Insight

More than **65% of responding businesses** anticipate at least a **moderate negative impact** on their ability to recruit and retain employees if Plano withdraws from DART.

- Many respondents emphasized:
 - Entry-level workers, service employees, interns, and younger professionals rely on transit.
 - Reduced transit access would shrink the available labor pool.
 - Transit access is increasingly important for workforce inclusion and accessibility.

Question 2:

If transit services changed or were reduced, how might that impact your business operations or customer accessibility?

Common Themes Identified

- Reduced access for employees without vehicles
- Decreased customer traffic for retail and service businesses
- Increased absenteeism and scheduling challenges
- Potential need to increase wages or transportation subsidies

Several businesses noted that transportation access is a hidden but critical operational factor, especially for:

- Hospitality
- Healthcare
- Retail
- Professional services with hourly or shift-based employees

Question 3:

How do you think withdrawing from DART could impact Plano's reputation and ability to serve business needs?

Dominant Feedback

Respondents expressed strong concern that withdrawal could:

- Signal that Plano is less connected to the region
- Reduce attractiveness to relocating companies
- Place Plano at a disadvantage compared to peer cities
- Undermine Plano's reputation as a regional employment hub

Many comments referenced competition with cities such as Dallas, Richardson, Frisco, and Irving that maintain regional transit access.

Question 4:

Do you provide DART passes or public transportation incentives to employees?

Results

- **Yes:** ~20%
- **No:** ~80%

Key Insight

While most employers do not directly subsidize transit, many stated that **availability of transit itself remains essential**, even without formal employer-sponsored programs.

Question 5:

Do you support the City of Plano's possible withdrawal from DART services?

Results

- Oppose withdrawal: ~60%
- Support withdrawal: ~25%
- Unsure / need more information: ~15%

Key Insight

A clear majority of responding businesses do not support withdrawal from DART under current conditions.

- Notably:
 - Even some respondents critical of DART services expressed concern that complete withdrawal may create greater long-term risk than reform or renegotiation

Question 6:

Is there anything else you'd like us to know? (open ended)

- Strong Concerns About Workforce Impact
 - Employees without vehicles would be disproportionately affected
 - Employers fear losing reliable workers
 - Transit access supports workforce diversity and inclusion

- Regional Connectivity Matters
 - Businesses emphasized the importance of remaining connected to the DFW region
 - Concern that Plano could become “isolated” from regional employment flows

- Desire for Improvement — Not Elimination
 - Many respondents expressed:
 - Frustration with current service levels
 - Desire for better efficiency, coverage, and cost accountability
 - Preference for reform, restructuring, or renegotiation rather than full withdrawal

- Economic Development Implications
 - Respondents repeatedly referenced:
 - Corporate relocations
 - Talent attraction
 - Site selection competitiveness
 - Several noted that transportation infrastructure is frequently evaluated during relocation decisions.