High Tech Travel

The Dallas Region is on the cutting edge of some of the world’s most innovative transportation solutions. These technologies will allow DFW to remain one of the least-congested major cities in the world, now and far into the future.

From deployment of tested and trusted high-speed rail technology, to design and testing of options straight out of science fiction like flying taxis, Dallas continues to seek out more efficient, effective and sustainable transportation options for its residents and workers.

High-Speed Rail

The Dallas-Fort Worth region is leading all domestic metros in the development of the first truly high-speed railroad in the U.S. Texas Central is building a 205-mph Dallas-Houston train line that will cut the current commute time from three to four hours by car to less than 90 minutes, about a third of the current travel time.

The first test route between Frisco’s The Star and Dallas Fort Worth International Airport will lay the path for making DFW a world leader in air travel service. The development of new vertiports, drone deliveries will also be possible. Already, the FAA has granted the University of Texas at Arlington a Certificate of Authorization (COA) to fly in the airspace around their Riverbend Campus, giving researchers and affiliated faculty a unique venue for advancing the technology.

Uber Elevate, Vertiports, Drone Deliveries

Uber is working with Fort Worth-based Bell Helicopter and Dallas-based Hillwood to accelerate the eventual large-scale deployment of electric vertical takeoff and landing vehicles (VTOLs) - the air taxi. DFW is one of a handful test markets. The first test route between Frisco’s The Star and Dallas Fort Worth International Airport will lay the path for making DFW a world leader in air travel service. With the development of new vertiports, drone deliveries will also be possible.

One of the world’s first autonomous vehicles is named “EMMA,” is the same type of vehicle used as the nation’s first autonomous municipal public shuttle, Milo EasyMile. That vehicle connected crowds to public entertainment venues, including Six Flags Over Texas, AT&T Stadium and Globe Life Park in Arlington. The service retired in the fall of 2018 and was replaced by three, free self-driving Drive.AI vans, which operated until May 2019. Drive.AI also partnered with the City of Frisco for a pilot program, before moving to Arlington.

From a freight hauling perspective, autonomous trucking company Kodiak Robotics announced in 2019 that it opened operations in Dallas-Fort Worth, in support of its autonomous freight operations in Texas. AT&T and Verizon have both begun wide-announced in 2019 that it opened operations in Dallas-Fort Worth, in support of its autonomous vehicles.

In 2018, Uber Elevate, in partnership with the company’s parent, Alphabet’s Loon, announced a test route between Frisco’s The Star and Dallas Fort Worth International Airport will lay the path for making DFW a world leader in air travel service. With the development of new vertiports, drone deliveries will also be possible.

The latest technology to roll out is the electric sit-down scooter by Ojo that has a range of 50 miles and tops out at 20 mph.

Those not up for mounting electric bikes or scooters might opt for Dallas-based e-fat bikes, which, since 2010, have transported people across downtown Dallas and surrounding districts, including Deep Ellum and Uptown. The six-seat, enclosed electric vehicles offer free rides, and are funded by display advertising, corporate services and city tours. Riders are encouraged to tip their drivers.

The region’s mass-transit provider – Dallas Area Rapid Transit – has developed the GoPass app, allowing users to track incoming buses and trains in real-time, and to pay for rides without carrying cash or cards. The app also estimates commute times, and locates electric scooters, restaurants and other points of interest. The GoPass also offers Uber and Lyft options.

One Dallas startup firm, named Alto, has received funding to disrupt the conventional rideshare market with a safety-minded orientation. From vehicle standards to employee vetting and training, Alto strives to offer a premium, professional and customizable ride share experience.

Autonomous Vehicles

Texas’ less restrictive regulations and the Dallas Region’s business-friendly environment have set the stage for the early adoption of autonomous vehicles. In November 2019, Uber began sending vehicles into downtown Dallas to collect data that might be used in autonomous vehicles. This year, Dallas Fort Worth International Airport joined a handful of airports in deploying autonomous passenger shuttles. The shuttle, named “EMMA,” is the same type of vehicle used as the nation’s first autonomous municipal public shuttle, Milo EasyMile. That vehicle connected crowds to public entertainment venues, including Six Flags Over Texas, AT&T Stadium and Globe Life Park in Arlington.

The service retired in the fall of 2018 and was replaced by three, free self-driving Drive.AI vans, which operated until May 2019. Drive.AI also partnered with the City of Frisco for a pilot program, before moving to Arlington. From a freight hauling perspective, autonomous trucking company Kodiak Robotics announced in 2019 that it opened operations in Dallas-Fort Worth, in support of its autonomous freight operations in Texas. AT&T and Verizon have both begun wide-scale 5G technology deployment, a critical element for connecting vehicles of all types to one another and to the infrastructure that supports them.