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Irving's Orange Line ushers in new era in North Texas mass transit

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By [Brandon Formby](#) / Reporter
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UPDATE @ 1:02 p.m. from myself and colleagues [Debbie Fleck](#) and [Eden Stiffman](#):

Among the biggest complaints about the new **Orange Line** train service today are the elimination of a **Dallas to Las Colinas** bus route and what riders see as a lack of needed parking near Irving's three new stations.

"It benefits some people, but not everyone," **Roberto Amaya** of Dallas said of the new line.

Like many of Orange Line's new commuters, Amaya on Monday mourned the loss of express bus route **202** between downtown Dallas to Las Colinas. The route was disbanded with the opening of this city's three new stations, two of which are in the Las Colinas Urban Center. Many of 202's expatriates rode the Orange Line on Monday and talked about how much faster the bus was than the light-rail service.

"I'm bummed," said **Craig Petty** of Rockwall, who gave up driving from his home in Rockwall

to his job in Las Colinas when gas got too expensive.

I've got a call out to DART spokesman **Morgan Lyons** to see what the agency says people's reactions to the 202 vs. the Orange Line.

Jenny Adams of Irving used to park at the **North Irving Transit Center** to take the bus to her job in downtown Dallas. North Irving buses are now centered around the **Las Colinas Urban Center Station**, which doesn't offer parking.

Adams this morning parked at the transit center and used a walkway underneath a bridge at Northwest Highway to get to the **Irving Convention Center Station**. She said the walk from her car to the station took about 15 minutes.

She's not sure yet while this will become her new commute, though she believe DART is better than taking her car all the way into Dallas.

"I'm worried about that walk if it rains," she said. "But it's better than driving all the way."

UPDATE @ 10:19 a.m.:

Frances Farris of Dallas was such a fan of Monday morning's expansion of the **DART Orange Line** into Irving that she took a victory lap.

"I caught it just to ride until my next bus comes," she said Monday from her seat aboard a DART train that wove out **University of Dallas Station**.

The Dallas woman was among the scores of North Texans this morning who were the first to use light-rail trains in I

She caught the train from **Bachman Station** and rode into Irving, where she works at *Suburban Parent* magazine. **Las Colinas Urban Center Station**, but had so much time before it arrived Monday morning that she decided to take ar

So far she was a fan. She said her bus to Bachman was a little late and the timing of her 310 bus at the Urban Cent bus routes, hadn't quite worked out Monday morning. But that didn't dampen her faith in the DART system.

"They all connect up in a way that's going to work," she said.

University of Dallas student **Adrian McKinney** isn't in summer school, but rode the train to his university's namesake reconnaissance mission.

"I'm just riding it to see what the commute is like," he said before hopping off at school's station.

ORIGINAL POST:

At long last, Irving is now part of the **DART light-rail system** with today's expansion of the **Orange Line**. People who live in Irving and work elsewhere — and those who live outside the city but work in the suburb with an enviable cache of corporations — began using the city's three new stations today as regular train service there got under way.



People get off the DART train at Las Colinas Urban Center St Irving. (Lara Solt / Staff Photographer)

Today's 4.5-mile expansion of the Orange Line from **Bachman Station** to the **Irving Convention Center Station** is the first of three phases of the line's eventual tie-in to Terminal A of **Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport**.

Folks got a preview of the line and its new stations on Saturday as part of DART's "Super Saturday" celebration of the expansion. There are **three new stations in the city**: the convention center station, the Las Colinas Urban Center Station and the University of Dallas Station. **Each station features its own unique look, location and architectural details designed by UD professors.**

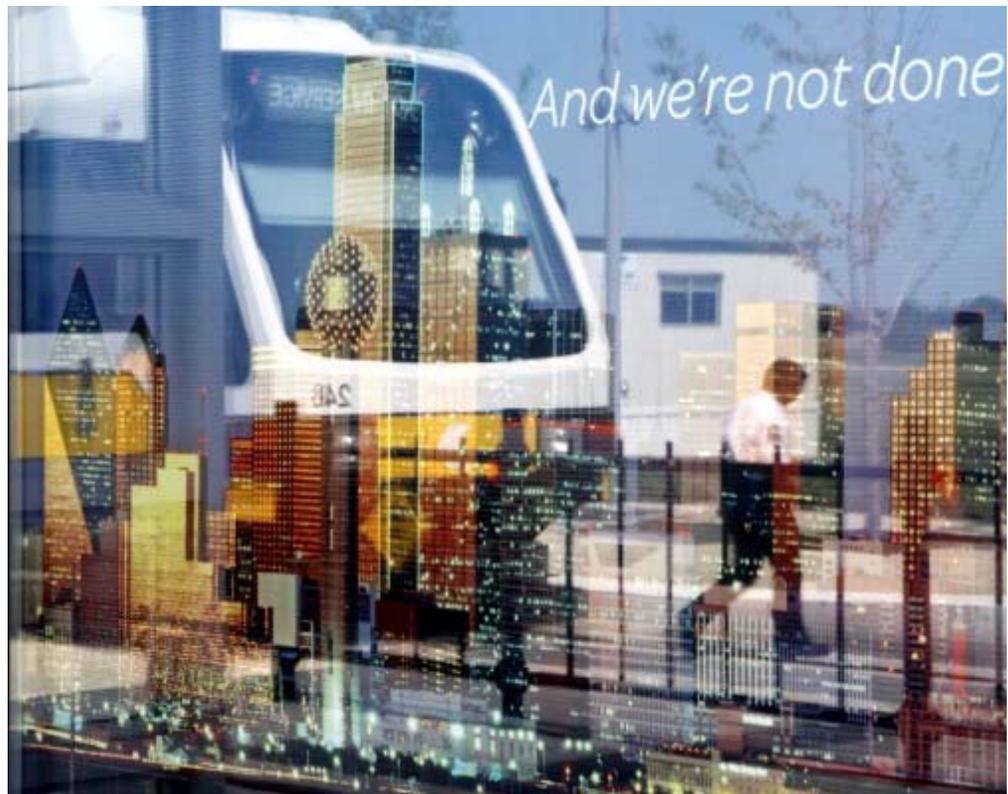
The expansion marks the beginning of DART's last great chance to sell car-loving North Texans on mass-transit and **Irving's opportunity to bolster its long-held plans for economic development** in the Las Colinas Urban Center and elsewhere along the line. **No other city has waited so long for light rail while paying so much into DART as Irving**, which made a **\$1 billion** investment and chose the agency over the Dallas Cowboys.

If you're a new Orange Line rider — or a DART rider who accidentally found themselves in Irving this morning — hit the comments section or [email us](#) about your experience. Did it live up to your expectations? Did you run into any unforeseen problems or newly-discovered joys riding the line this morning? Think you'll make it habit?

And you Irvingites — has the long wait for light-rail service been worth it?



The Orange Line train passing through the Las Colinas Urban Center Station. Photo by DART Staff.



An Orange line train passed a picture of the Dallas skyline at the Irving Convention Center Station.

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