

## DART trains likely to reach D/FW Airport earlier than anticipated



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A turning point in North Texas history — running light-rail trains directly into the region's international airport — will happen sooner than previously expected.

Dallas Area Rapid Transit officials said Friday that they will open their station at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport well ahead of their Dec. 31 target date.

How far ahead? Well, there's no exact date and there are no promises. But the hope is the Orange Line will be finished when Big Tex starts welcoming folks to the State Fair of Texas in September.

"We're working on that," said DART president and executive director Gary Thomas. "We're running the numbers. We're checking to see if we can make all that work."

No matter the station's exact opening, the line's completion will be a watershed moment for the region. Dallas has long dreamed of having a passenger rail line tie its downtown to the airport. Once it happens, Dallas is largely considered free to dub itself an international city.

"It opens our city, our region to the entire world," Thomas said.

Being ahead of schedule is also a landmark achievement for DART, considering that the Orange Line's fate was uncertain at least twice in the past six years. In December 2007, DART said it was \$900 million short on money needed to build the line. In July 2010, the agency said it was \$275 million short of what it needed to build the final leg to the airport.

Those shortfalls and that uncertainty drew anger that spurred the agency to refinance existing debt, cut administrative expenses and develop a new approach to design and construction in order to finish the line. Five stations are already open on the existing leg of the line. Nearly 13,000 people use those stations each month.

No one's seen the Orange Line's evolution quite like DART board member Rick Stopfer. He was an Irving planning and zoning commissioner and then City Council member when the city and DART worked to buy up land for the line. Irving, which sits between Dallas and the airport, committed tens of millions of dollars to the project so the line would run through its Las Colinas urban center.

"To actually see something of this magnitude complete is an accomplishment," Stopfer said.

He said the station will give airport employees and North Texas travelers a new option other than highways and toll roads to get to D/FW. It's also expected to make it easier for visitors to get from the airport to downtown destinations like the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center and adjacent Omni Dallas Hotel.

"It opens up all kinds of opportunities," Stopfer said.

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 **Chiara Granado** 5 hours ago

This is exciting. An added convenience!

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 **Anonymous** 2 days ago

All these yo yo negative comments?

Don't like, don't ride it. Go ahead and pay the parking tolls going into and out of it.

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 **Anonymous** 2 days ago

Great.

No more parking fees or high priced cabbie rides.

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 **AdamsonScott1** 2 days ago

All that's keeping us from being an "international city" is the ability to fly to town then have to schlep your bags onto a train, protecting them against all sorts of riff-raff, then have to get off the train and transfer to another train or gawd-forbid, a city bus, meanwhile still schlepping all your bags on and off without help, subject to the elements and the unwashed masses. Golly, if I'd just only known. I've been renting a car all this time. I missed out on the opportunity to have my bags stolen on a train in an "international city"!!!

[▼ 1 reply](#)

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 **mdunlap1** 1 day ago

Racism and comically absurd caricatures of public transit are fun. Stay in the sticks, Cletus. You clearly aren't cut out for city life.

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 **DallasNative** 2 days ago

Long overdue. Great to make DFW an intermodal.

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 **Cody Yocom** 2 days ago

Now to turn to a Love Field Connection. Light rail also needs to find ways to connect to another one of Dallas' more walkable communities - Uptown.

[▼ 3 replies](#)

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 **DallasNative** 2 days ago

Missed that opportunity about 15 years ago when the Feds offered to pay \$30mm to have DART go right into the Love Field terminal, but the City could not figure out how to accept the money.

[▼ 1 reply](#)

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**richard schumacher** 1 day ago

(Where do stories like this come from?) The direct option cost about \$300 million extra and caused the project to fail the cost-effectiveness requirements of that time. There was no way to build it unless local entities paid for the entire project, not just the incremental cost. An underground peoplomover between the Burbank station and the terminal will cost less and work perfectly well.

Reply

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**mdunlap1** 1 day ago

Uptown has numerous bus lines, a trolley, and a train station right at the door of one of its main residential/commercial centers (the West Village area).

Reply

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**K** 2 days ago

I believe this project has been delayed in order to keep revenue from parking at the airport. I drive by the rail project and it looks like the work is done. Dallas and DART need this line completed. It will benefit the entire area.

Reply

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**Wylie H Dallas** 3 days ago

The DFW Airport station is located entirely with the City of Grapevine and Tarrant County. Neither entity contributes to DART, so I don't understand how this works.

Are the existing DART members underwriting service to Tarrant County and the City of Grapevine? I have no doubt that Jerry Christian is highly focused on this issue; but I would still be interested in the answer.

Reply

[7 replies](#)

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**1DaIM** 2 days ago

You keep posting this even though the answer has been given to you a number of times. Yes, the airport terminal technically is in Grapevine. But Grapevine has very little say in the goings on of the airport. The DART rail line enters the airport through Irving, which is a DART city. It is unlikely that many Grapevine people are planning to drive to the airport and pay for parking in order to take the DART rail line somewhere.

Reply

[1 reply](#)

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**Wylie H Dallas** 2 days ago

Grapevine has enough "say" at DFW to be pocketing most of the sales taxes collected there.

Reply

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**Chris Fowler** 2 days ago

The DFW DART station is located on the north-east corner of the airport, adjacent to Terminal A. That part of DFW is in Dallas County, not Tarrant. While the station is technically in the city limits of Grapevine, the station is more accurately providing service to the "city" of DFW Airport (yes, DFW has its own zip code and city designation by the USPS). Since the airport is jointly owned by the city of Dallas, DART is providing service to a facility owned by a DART member city. After leaving DFW, the orange line has stops in Irving, another DART member, not in Grapevine.

Reply

[4 replies](#)

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**Wylie H Dallas** 2 days ago

Chris, you're incorrect, but your misperception is a common one. The county line actually runs to the east of all of the airport terminals--- they are all 100% located within Tarrant County. Also, USPS zip codes are independent of municipal boundaries. Finally, Grapevine collects most of the sales taxes at DFW Airport, so why aren't they contributing to DART?

Reply

[3 replies](#)

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**Chris Fowler** 2 days ago

Post a map that proves that. The maps I looked at before I posted (yes, I check my facts) show the Tarrant/Dallas county line running right down the center of the airport.

Reply

[2 replies](#)

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**Wylie H Dallas** 2 days ago

Here is a link to the City of Grapevine's official map on its website, which clearly indicates that the location of the station is entirely within Grapevine's municipal boundaries: [http://maps.grapevintexas.gov/GrapevineGIS/nexVIEWer\\_Flex.html?GroupID=14](http://maps.grapevintexas.gov/GrapevineGIS/nexVIEWer_Flex.html?GroupID=14)

Here is a link to an official Tarrant County map: <https://mapit.tarrantcounty.com/PublicMapView/>

If you zoom in on the airport, it clearly shows that all terminals and the consolidated rental car facility are located entirely within Tarrant County. Although most people think that International Parkway runs down the county line, the county line actually parallels International Parkway, but is located east of the terminals, running north-south between the terminals and the closest primary taxiway serving the eastern runways.

Google map also shows the same boundaries. This is why Grapevine collects the sales taxes paid at the airport.

Reply [▼ 1 reply](#)

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**Wylie H Dallas** 1 day ago

It's actually even easier, just check the Tarrant County map viewer ( <https://mapit.tarrantcounty.com/PublicMapView/> ), then click on the box to show city boundaries. You can zoom in to the airport and confirm everything I stated.

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