

# DART will roll into D/FW Airport this summer



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Dallas Area Rapid Transit will begin running light-rail trains to its new station at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport on Aug. 18, officials announced Tuesday.

The station will directly connect DART's Orange Line to Gate A10 of the airport.

Local officials herald the station opening as a watershed moment in North Texas transportation. They say it will provide seamless access from DART's 13 member cities to the world.

"It really connects people and places beyond what we ever thought about," said Gary Thomas, DART's president and executive director.

For locals, it promises to provide an alternative beyond driving, taking a cab or booking a shuttle to get to D/FW.

"In real terms, it's symbolic of what DART represents, which is regional connectivity," said Harry LaRosiliere, mayor of Plano where the Orange Line originates.

The station is a short, outside walk from the airport's A10 entrance. Travelers flying out of Terminal A can check in once inside and then go through security.

Travelers flying out of other terminals have two choices once they get off the train. Those checking bags can catch an airport shuttle to other terminals outside the A10 entrance. Those with carry-on bags only can check in for their flight inside the entrance, go through security and then take the airport's SkyLink to their terminal.

A trip from the airport to the West End Station will take about 50 minutes. The airport station will be the last stop on the Orange Line, which runs from Plano through downtown Dallas and Irving.

"This is something we've waited on a long time," said John Crawford, president and CEO of Downtown Dallas Inc.

Crawford and many other area leaders say the station will help make downtown a more attractive place to live. About 200 people lived downtown in 1996, the same year DART opened its first 14 stations on 11 miles of track.

Now downtown is home to about 8,000 people, with 5,000 new residential units in the works. The Orange Line completion will give DART its 62nd station on what will be a 90-mile light-rail network.

The airport station is also seen as giving Dallas another tool to lure companies to relocate and conventions to take place here.

"As I see it, it creates more good news for downtown," Crawford said.

An airport station has been in the works since DART was created in 1983. Most recent plans called for the station to open by Dec. 31. DART announced earlier this year that it planned to open earlier than that, but didn't give an exact date until Tuesday.

Many see the station as a final hurdle in Dallas being able to call itself a legitimate international city. Airport spokesman David Magana said most major European and Asian airports have trains connecting their airports to their city centers.

"It puts us on a very good list of airports to be on," he said.

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