

Short Format – Included in the email to recipients

Email subject: **Leading Mobility: Modernizing the DART System**

## February 2024

Hello Community Partners:

This month, many in our communities recognize the start of the Lunar New Year. It is a celebration of life, relationships, and the hope for a prosperous year ahead. According to the Chinese zodiac, 2024 is the Year of the Wood Dragon. In Chinese culture, wood represents vitality and creativity, and dragons are associated with authority, strength, and good fortune.



Those are all attributes that DART hopes to strengthen as we continue our progress on the agency’s initiatives.

This weekend, I am honored to represent both DART and my Taiwanese heritage at Chinese New Year celebration events for the Greater Dallas Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce and the North Texas Collin County Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce. Taiwan, and especially the city of Taipei, provides powerful examples of how strong public transportation can be an economic asset for a city or region.

In this issue, you will learn about the [System Modernization Program](#) that will replace and improve DART’s aging vehicles, facilities, and infrastructure, which will lead to a more reliable and comfortable travel experience for our riders.

You will also learn more about our new [DART Board Secretary M. Nathan Barbera](#) and the [City of Farmers Branch](#).

As the Year of the Dragon begins, I wish you and your loved ones a year filled with abundance, good health, happiness, and success.



*Nadine S. Lee*

President & Chief Executive Officer  
Dallas Area Rapid Transit  
[LeadingMobility@DART.org](mailto:LeadingMobility@DART.org)

## New Vehicles, Renovated Facilities Will Modernize System

Over the next 10 years, DART riders will enjoy new modern buses and trains, as well as renovated stations and transit centers. These updates will be most visible to the public and will show the communities we serve that DART is preparing for the future.

Known as the System Modernization Program, this comprehensive effort will also modernize DART's rail signal systems, renovate its bus and rail maintenance facilities, and enhance the resiliency of the rail system guideway, tracks, and other elements across the rail corridor during extreme weather.

[Click here to learn how the System Modernization Program fits into the agency's overall strategic plan.](#)



## DART Board Director Spotlight – M. Nathan Barbera

M. Nathan Barbera, a member of the DART Board of Directors, began a two-year term as the Secretary of the DART Board this past October. The cities of Plano and Farmers Branch appointed Barbera to the board in 2022.

[Click here to learn more about Director Barbera's goals for his service on the DART Board.](#)



## City Spotlight: Farmers Branch

*Each month, we will spotlight a city in the DART Service Area and the service that DART provides.*

Farmers Branch has been part of the DART Service Area since the agency's beginning in August 1983. The city has retained its small-town feel while offering direct big city access, an extensive parks system, a strong business community, and a growing restaurant scene.

Farmers Branch Station opened in December 2010 as part of the Green Line Phase II opening. Two bus routes and a GoLink zone also anchor at the station.

[Click here to learn more about the impact of DART Service in the city of Farmers Branch.](#)



Long Format – Articles posted as [DART Daily](#) articles

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Over the next 10 years, DART riders will enjoy new modern buses and trains, as well as renovated stations and transit centers. These updates will be most visible to the public and will show the communities we serve that DART is preparing for the future.

Known as the System Modernization Program, this comprehensive effort will also modernize DART's rail signal systems, renovate its bus and rail maintenance facilities, and enhance the resiliency of the rail system guideway, tracks, and other elements across the rail corridor during extreme weather.

The goals of this program are to:

- **Improve the Customer Experience** by enhancing security, cleanliness, reliability, and amenities.
- **Bring the DART System to a State of Good Repair**, a term that means our assets are in good to excellent condition, which allows the agency to maintain and operate its transit services at the full level of performance.
- **Modernize the DART System** with next-generation buses and rail vehicles, level boarding at all rail platforms, unified signal systems, passenger and maintenance facility improvements, and increased resiliency, capacity, and efficiency.



The System Modernization Program is an integral part of the agency's long-term strategic plan. These equipment and infrastructure improvements will help DART achieve its strategic goals to deliver a quality customer experience, create a seamless travel experience, and create fantastic spaces that add value to the community.

DART is engaging riders, non-riders, stakeholders, and employees in the planning processes to ensure that the updated system reflects the future of public transit. To guide the design of the new light rail vehicles, the agency conducted focus groups, on-board interviews, and surveys. DART also gathered feedback for its next bus fleet by surveying riders on vehicles, at bus shelters, and at transit centers. The agency collected employee input through an online survey.

Upgrades of this magnitude require a highly coordinated effort. DART has hired consultants to help the agency manage the numerous interconnected projects and worked to improve internal communications to ensure employees are aware of the processes.

The System Modernization Program will enable DART to raise the level of service for our riders by enhancing the safety, reliability, and accessibility of our system.

*Karen has asked Ron Maddox in Facilities Construction for before-and-after photos of a past light rail station rehabilitation project as an example of improvements to passenger facilities.*

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M. Nathan Barbera, a member of the DART Board of Directors, began a two-year term as the Secretary of the DART Board this past October. The cities of Plano and Farmers Branch appointed Barbera to the board in 2022.

Nathan is a partner at Albin Oldner Law PLLC. He has over 20 years' experience as a civil litigation attorney representing insurance companies, policy holders, restaurants, corporations, employers, and various business entities.

In addition to the DART Board, Nathan volunteers as a member of the Medical City Plano Community Advisory Council and recently was the chair of the Athletics Committee of the Plano ISD Future Forward Task Force. He is the past chair of the City of Plano Planning & Zoning Commission, and a past member of numerous boards and commissions for organizations serving Plano and Collin County.

Barbera said he wanted to serve on the DART Board to help bring the Silver Line to completion, improve safety and security on DART's trains and buses, and modernize the entire DART System. He further hopes to bring equity to Board of Directors membership and promote an equitable distribution of DART's tax revenue.

We appreciate the knowledge and love of Plano that Nathan brings to his service on the DART Board.

## City Spotlight – Farmers Branch



*Each month, we will spotlight a city in the DART Service Area and the service that DART provides.*

Farmers Branch is along the I-35E Stemmons Freeway corridor in the northwest corner of the DART Service Area. The city has retained its small-town feel while offering direct big city access, an extensive parks system, a strong business community, and a growing restaurant scene.

The city has been part of the DART Service Area since the agency's beginning in August 1983. By September 1984, DART was operating express bus service between Farmers Branch and downtown Dallas.

Farmers Branch Station opened in December 2010 as part of the Green Line Phase II. Two bus routes and a GoLink zone also anchor at the station.

- Routes 227 and 233 have a combined ridership of 151,531 in quarter 1 (Q1) FY 2024.
- There were more than 52,888 boardings at Farmers Branch Station in Q1 FY 2024.
- The Farmers Branch GoLink zone covers much of the city with 4,850 boardings in Q1 FY 2024.
- As part of the June 2024 service change, the GoLink zone will expand to the northwest, southwest, and east.



When the light rail station opened, there was little nearby beyond the [Farmers Branch Historical Park](#) and the [Children's Health StarCenter](#) ice-skating rink. The city has capitalized on DART's investment and attracted mixed-use development to the area.

Today, the area is known as the [Mustang Station Arts & Culture District](#), which includes [The Grove at Mustang Crossing](#) special events area, restaurants and retail at The Shops at Mustang Station, and the Mustang Station apartments. Historically, Farmers Branch was known as Mustang Branch in connection with the mustang grapes grown in this region's fertile soil before the 20th century.



The area also includes and a small neighborhood of single-family homes within a block from the station. Nearby, [The Firehouse Theatre](#) now operates in a historic fire station. The city recently opened the [JOYA glow-in-the-dark playground](#) at Oran Good Park. A new city-owned event space, [Venue 1842](#), is under construction in the Farmers Branch Historical Park.

The city of Farmers Branch's Economic Development department estimates that \$83 million in new development has been built since the opening of the DART station. Additional multifamily



housing is set to start construction in 2025.

