

Quarterly NEWSLETTER

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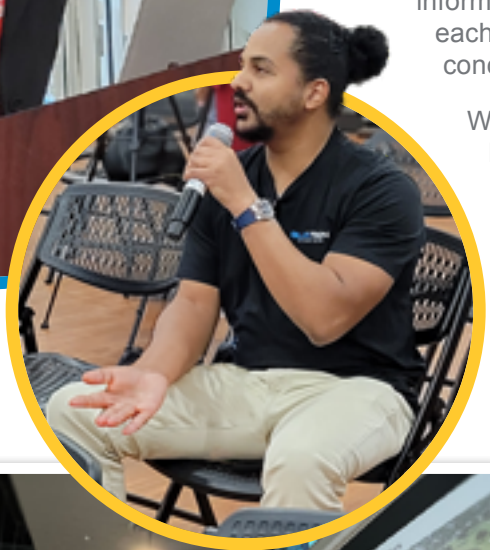


Summer Biannual Update



DART maintained its tradition of providing every community within the DART Silver Line Regional Rail project corridor a biannual update.

Members of the Silver Line communications team, Archer Western Herzog (AWH) project managers and DART staff gathered at various locations in six of the cities impacted by the construction of the regional rail this summer to provide the communities with updates on the project. The second biannual meeting of the year covered overall Silver Line information and milestones, construction and traffic updates for each city and school district, and answers to questions and concerns from the audience.



With a 26-mile corridor to cover, progress on the Silver Line varies from city to city so questions vary from each meeting and presentation. The goal was to leave each gathering, having informed the attendees about the project, answered their questions and given them a new or reassuring perspective on how the project will benefit their city and the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

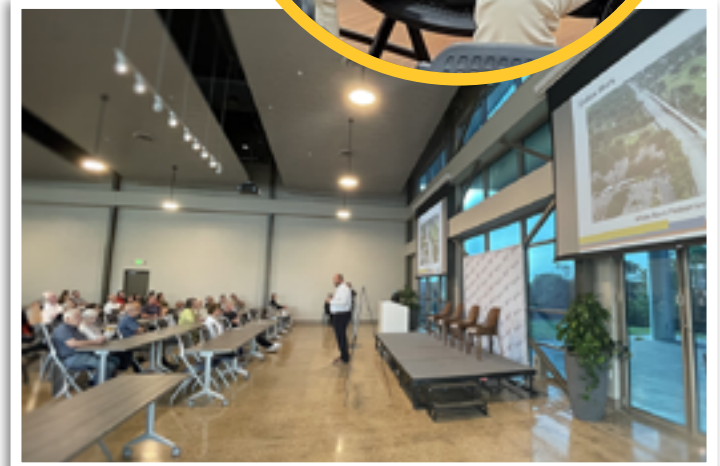
The following is a summary of the biannual presentations and question-and-answer sessions DART hosted this quarter:

Addison

Addison residents have been active in wanting to know about progress on their station, hours of operation for the Silver Line and the status of the adjacent Cotton Belt Regional Trail that is being constructed as part of the project. As such, the presentation focused on Silver Line progress, the Addison Station reaching close to 90% completion and track installation being virtually complete in the area. Residents were informed that proposed service hours are 5 a.m. to midnight during the week, with weekend hours pending, and the the pedestrian bridge connecting Addison to Dallas via the Dallas North Tollway is planned to open in Q1 2025.

Carrollton

Carrollton residents were excited to see the progress of their new downtown station and the near completion of rebuilt rail bridges throughout the city. They did express frustration with timeliness of road closure notifications and were concerned with a growing presence of unhoused residents in the downtown area and near trails. Residents were informed that the Cotton Belt Regional Trail will connect to existing trails downtown. DART is working with the city to repurpose the Historic Carrollton Depot near the new station with an increased security presence and possible retail space near the trail. DART also pledged to provide more accurate and date-specific information on road closures and traffic impacts.



Coppell

Coppell residents new to the area or unfamiliar with the project inquired why DART is putting a station in their city without providing additional service. They were pleased that construction has improved conditions at impacted rail crossings but expressed concerns about the rough nature at some of those same crossings. Prior to the project's completion, all rail crossings will be checked and smoothed out if needed. It was also explained that DART offers services for its member cities, of which Coppell is not one. While the new Silver Line Station is in the Dallas city limits, bus service can connect riders to Carrollton and Irving where other rail and bus transit options is available.

Dallas

Residents in North Dallas questioned the need for the Silver Line project and asked about pedestrian safety, the planned hours of service and the status of current construction projects in the area. DART staff explained that progress continues and the Hillcrest Road opening is still on schedule for January 2025. Residents were also reminded that the service hours are not final and must be approved by the DART Board. At the request of the community, DART is also including drop chains and/or exit gates at crossings with pedestrian access to ensure there is no access to the track guideway from the trail. Additionally, a traffic signal on Coit Road that was pending city approval and anticipated to improve the newly updated traffic pattern was installed and was operating two weeks after the meeting.

Plano

Plano residents were informed that the majority of major construction is complete in their area and Silver Line trains will be testing between the Shiloh Road Station and west of the UT Dallas Station in Richardson. Questions centered around train noise during testing and revenue service, the cost and availability of long-term parking at stations and any impact the DART fare restructure plan would have on Silver Line fare once open. Residents were reminded that quiet zones are not in effect during testing and will not be in place until revenue service begins. DART staff informed them that Silver Line fares will follow other DART fares, but regional service impacts with partners at Trinity Metro and DCTA have yet to be determined. DART is in the process of evaluating options for paid long-term parking closest to station platforms.

Richardson

Richardson residents were excited to learn that most major construction in the area is complete and that testing will be occurring within the city limits. Questions on quiet zones were addressed much like Plano, with residents also informed that they could not board the train or enter the station areas until revenue service begins. UT Dallas students asked about the possibility of extended service hours and were told it could be looked at in the future, but expanded hours would need to be budgeted and approved by DART. City staff addressed the question of trail access, saying there would be a public announcement once all trail areas near the Silver Line could be used.

2025



Winter Biannual Community Meetings



Visit us online to stay informed on upcoming biannual meeting dates and locations.





▶ DART Silver Line Passes First Round of Tests

Systems on vehicles and track, safety top priorities as testing begins in Plano and Richardson

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) began a second run of vehicle testing on the Silver Line Regional Rail alignment on Sunday, Aug. 25.

The testing on Silver Line tracks will be exclusive to Segment C of the project, falling between Waterview Parkway and the Shiloh Road Station. Times of testing will occur between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. throughout the week.

Flaggers will be present at each of the rail crossings, as required by Federal Railroad Administration guidelines, to help drivers and pedestrians navigate traffic safely and accurately. Engineers and rail crews will be testing the timing and duration of gates, lights, and warning signals at each crossing to ensure safe transitions for both freight and commuter rail that will share operations in the corridor once the Silver Line is in revenue service.

“Safety for the public, our operators and employees are the top priority as we undergo this testing period,” said Trey Walker, DART vice president of capital design and construction. “We will be checking everything from top to bottom and reviewing, adjusting and re-testing to make sure that we can travel through the corridor safely and anyone near the rail alignment knows we’re active and coming through.”

Drivers and pedestrians can expect to see both Silver Line vehicles and CPKC freight rail trains running on the tracks during testing as crews will test a rail cutover between City Line Drive and Waterview Parkway. Freight rail service will continue to only operate during its normally scheduled times (approximately between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m.) once testing is complete.

Silver Line vehicle testing will include operating its simulated route with stops at the 12th Street, CityLine/ Bush and UT Dallas stations with no passenger pick-up or drop-off points. All stations are active construction sites, so onlookers are not allowed on platforms or nearby walkways.

Quiet zones, which allow trains to use their horns only when there is a potential hazard on or near the tracks, will not be in effect during testing. Crews will be testing track and system configuration throughout the alignment but no train activity is anticipated.

To learn more about the Silver Line Regional Rail project, please visit www.dart.org/silverline.

▶ Orange Line Celebrates Decade at DFW Airport

DART Silver Line will join light rail in taking riders in and out of airport with direct rail service

Recent local transit conversation has focused on the DART Silver Line Regional Rail project and its ability to connect future passengers to Terminal B at DFW Airport once it opens for revenue service in late 2025 or early 2026.

But did you know that DART has been providing service to DFW Airport for a decade?

In fact, DART was the first transit agency in the southwestern United States to provide direct rail service – from station to terminal – to a regional or international airport. On Aug. 18, 2014, DART set that precedent with its initial voyage from Terminal A at DFW Airport to downtown Dallas.

The Orange Line began service in 2010 and added stops in the City of Irving two years later, connecting riders to the University of Dallas, Las Colinas, Irving Convention Center, and Dallas College’s North Lake campus. The 5-mile extension from Belt Line Station to DFW Airport brought DART’s light-rail system to the nation’s second-busiest airport (four months earlier than planned) and extended its service across 90 miles and 62 stations.

DART opened a deferred infill station in 2021, the Hidden Ridge Station, providing an additional rail stop for riders to access the various retail, entertainment, and business options in Las Colinas. Additional proposed infill stations, which are planned stations that can be added to existing rail service during a later time, near Loop 12 and South Las Colinas would bring the total number of stations on the Orange Line to 15, keeping the trip between downtown Dallas (from the Pearl/Arts District Station) to DFW Airport under one hour.

There are currently over 60 daily Orange Line trips scheduled from the Pearl/Arts District Station to DFW Airport during the week and 48 daily on the weekend. DART serves an average of 15,500 riders daily and 8,400 per weekend on the Orange Line.

Trinity Metro, which shares the operation of Trinity Railway Express (TRE) between Dallas and Fort Worth, became the second transit agency in the southwestern United States to offer direct rail to airport service when it began operation of the TexRail from downtown Fort Worth to DFW Airport in 2019.

DART will share station space with TexRail at the DFW North Station in Grapevine once Silver Line opens for revenue service, giving DFW Airport direct rail service originating from three of the 75 largest (according to 2020 U.S. Census) cities in the nation – Dallas, Fort Worth and Plano.

The addition of the Silver Line will provide a third direct point of rail access to DFW Airport, connecting riders in the northern DART service area from its starting point in Plano with stops in Richardson, North Dallas, Addison, Carrollton and Grapevine. DART also provides service to Dallas Love Field Airport through the Green Line and a dedicated bus route from the Inwood/Love Field Station.

David Ehrlicher, DART’s chief architect and an assistant vice president, who was heavily involved with designing the Orange Line, said getting the extension to DFW Airport 10 years ago was the key to helping make everything else fall into place.

“The Orange Line extension to DFW Airport is important because it offered airline passengers the opportunity to become DART customers with a single-seat ride to downtown Dallas and other destinations throughout the DART service area,” Ehrlicher said. “DFW Airport is a major access point for business and recreational travelers in the United States. By bringing direct rail service to DFW [Airport], we’ve been giving those same travelers an easy connection to all the Dallas area has to offer, while also offering residents a convenient way to reach their business or vacation destination.”

To learn more about the Orange Line or check the DART rail maps and schedule, visit DART Rail System.



▶ A Look into the Future

Silver Line tours provide various groups a personal view of project

As DART's largest development endeavor in over a decade, the Silver Line Regional Rail project draws a lot of interest from parties across the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Spanning 26 miles across seven cities and three counties with an estimated cost of almost \$2.1 billion, there several reasons why the regional commuter rail attracts so many eyeballs each month.

The Silver Line team consistently communicates with each of the cities and DFW Airport regarding progress on stations, track installation and overall construction in the area. To keep residents and the traveling public aware of the constant progress, city staff from public works, communications and administration typically get a first-hand look at the day-to-day operations within their city.

"We have consistent communication with our partners at the city level and DFW Airport, so they can help us in making sure residents, commuters and those visiting the area are aware of road closures and potential traffic issues. It's a necessity with a project on this grand in scale and reach" said Mario Zavala, DART project communications manager. "It's why we offer project tours to our partners, so they can see the work we're doing across the 26 miles."

Area tours of the Silver Line are common for city leaders to check in on milestones and pain points around their city, but DART also hosts a tour each quarter for representatives of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to see how the project is advancing. With roughly 45% of the project's construction costs covered by federal funds in the form of low-interest loans and grants, the quarterly tours serve as a way for FTA officials to check in on their investment.

The tours cover the entire 26-mile corridor with stops at each of the 10 stations and any points where major construction is occurring or has been recently completed. FTA officials are provided quarterly reports that summarize progress on the project and regularly interact with Archer Western Herzog (AWH) crews in the field to get real-time answers to questions.

"With multiple delays, rising costs and a global pandemic interrupting planning and construction, this project has come under a lot of scrutiny. These tours allow the FTA and our local partners to see first-hand that we're making steady progress toward getting passengers on Silver Line trains by the end of next year or early 2026," said Trey Walker, DART vice president of capital design and construction.

Recent Silver Line tours allowed FTA officials to experience – with trains passing by as construction crews continued building a passenger platform – the new aerial light-rail station that is being built at 12th Street in Plano as part of the project as well as peer down more than 40 feet into a hole that is being converted into a pump station to alleviate high water levels in North Dallas. AWH crews bore through almost 18 feet of soil, clay, and rock to clear out a pathway for vehicles to pass underneath the Silver Line track and a pump station that will ensure the newly constructed Hillcrest Road doesn't flood.

But tours aren't relegated to just city personnel and federal officials.

In the past three months, DART has taken high school students from the Dallas Youth Commission, a group of architectural and engineering summer interns and employees from the strategic communication team on a Silver Line tour. The goal for each group was similar with the Silver Line team wanting to inform them about the project overall while also ensuring they got their questions answered while delivering a tailored message for the separate student groups and staff.

The high school tour focused on how different groups within the project interacted with each other to make sure construction and communication moves along smoothly on a regular basis. This allowed the group to ask more career-focused questions and opened traveling discussions about college majors and future internship opportunities with DART, AWH and cities.

The college intern tour focused more on the planning, design and construction of the project with students walking the station platforms and construction sites asking questions about design elements being in certain places and the nuances around the construction process. In between stops, the group focused on ways they could get more hands-on experience in their field of study as well as potential job opportunities with DART.

"The tour was awesome. It was fascinating to see how design plans start coming to life in the real world," said Victor Baez, a recent environmental engineering graduate of Colorado School of the Mines.

DART's strategic communication team wanted a sneak-peak at the entire corridor to help plan for future customer engagement events on the Silver Line. Their tour focused on accessibility to platforms and parking, nearby transit-oriented-development (TOD) and overall aesthetics of the stations and their locations within the city.

It's not easy to plan an event for over 1,000 attendees while finding adequate refreshment options, plenty of shade options (for those hot North Texas summers), ample parking, easy access to multiple bus stops and ensuring the safety of everyone involved from an active railway. Yet, the team came back full of ideas and overwhelmed with the amount of information gathered along the drive from the Shiloh Road Station to Terminal B at DFW Airport.

"I learned what it takes to create a significant expansion to DART's current level of transit service," said Nikki Modha, a special events manager at DART. "But the coolest part of the tour was being able to see the potential for each station to become a vibrant, useful space in its own community. The Silver Line has the potential to transform how residents interact with public transit, potentially increasing DART ridership and community engagement."



PAY ATTENTION



Track testing has begun.
Earbuds out. Eyes up.

ARRIVE SAFELY



➤ First Stop, UT Dallas!

University president, staff get a sneak peek at Silver Line train and campus station

Trains seem to bring out the inner kid in everyone – even presidents.

No, there wasn't a Republican or Democratic campaign stop along the DART Silver Line Regional Rail project before November's presidential election. But there was one excited current president eager to get a first-hand look at one of most popular accomplishments of his tenure.

UT Dallas students and staff have been some of the most vocal proponents of the Silver Line project and they have Dr. Richard Benson to thank. It was under the university president's watch that the UT Dallas Station went from plan to reality and, with him retiring at the end of the academic year, it was important to provide him a sneak peak while the trains are in the area.

"A lot has gone into making sure the University of Texas at Dallas was an active part of this project and Dr. Benson played a big part in that, so we wanted to show him the fruit of that vision," said Dr. Calvin Jamison, the university's vice president for facilities and economic development.

Dr. Benson, Dr. Jamison and other staff members spent time with DART and contracted personnel checking out the Silver Line vehicles during a simulated test run, pushing the button to open the doors and boarding the train at the UT Dallas Station. Once on board, the group inspected the train from top to bottom, sitting on various seats, checking the sturdiness of overhead luggage racks, trying the on-board USB charging ports, and walking from one end of the train to the other.

The group asked questions about everything from how fast the train would travel during trips – the trains will not exceed 65 mph on any part of the corridor – to if they were made in the United States, which they are – in Salt Lake City, Utah by Stadler. Dr. Benson even got to check out the view from the operator's chair, making sure the vehicle stayed in a safe position while enjoying the view of the extension of Rutherford Road, another part of the project.

"The Silver Line will be a game changer for this university, the city (of Richardson) and our students," Benson said with a smile. "Sitting here, looking at the progress we've made is amazing. But you know what'd make it better... think we could change the colors of the rail crossing to orange and green?"

Under Benson's nine years of guidance, UT Dallas grew its student enrollment by over 7,000, added an on-campus wind tunnel for automobile and subsonic testing, created a cultural district featuring the Crow Museum's Asian Art collection, and moved up to NCAA Division II athletics. But for many students, his work in growing the university's reputation across the state and nation, will be supported even more with their increased access to more opportunities throughout the DFW area thanks to their own Silver Line station.



➤ Restructuring of fares in DART's near future

A key component of DART's strategic plan as it continues to improve, is to become the "first in mind mobility partner" for residents who live or work in the DART Service Area. This means ensuring a clean and safe transit system that is easy to use, reliable, and enjoyable to ride.

As part of this vision, DART began a comprehensive review of the agency's fare policy, structure, and programs with a goal of creating a fare structure with effectiveness, simplicity, and equity in mind. Over the past two years, DART conducted extensive research and analysis – including industry benchmarking, public outreach, alternative assessment, and consensus building – to formulate the agency's first fare change since 2018.

"We left no stone unturned in looking to find a way to balance the needs of our ridership base while also helping DART achieve the necessary components to keep improving our transit services now and into the future," said Jing Xu, assistant vice president of service planning and scheduling, who led the fare restructuring analysis.

The feedback DART received was informative, helping shape the decisions made in the restructured fare plan. Riders stressed that the current fare structure was too complex, leaving them confused about which fare to purchase and how to apply transfers during trips.

Fare capping will continue to be available on a day and a calendar month basis. Riders who use a fare payment method that provides fare capping will receive the most benefit.

The fare changes were reviewed by the DART Board in September after several rounds of public meetings, outreach at stations to gather input from riders and stakeholders, and a public hearing in late August where riders and residents of DART's member cities were able to express their comments and concerns. The Board will make a final decision to approve or adjust the proposed restructured fare program in October.

If approved, the new fare structure is slated to go into effect March 1, 2025. Changes to any program that operates on a calendar year, such as the Corporate Annual Pass or Educational Institution Semester Pass, would begin on January 1, 2025.

Proposed fare changes apply only to local DART fares, so the changes would be in effect once the Silver Line opens for revenue service. Discussions on regional fare rates with Trinity Metro and the Denton County Transportation Authority are ongoing and once determined, those changes will be implemented in late 2025.

The proposed fare restructure includes these changes:

- Consolidating multiple partial day-pass options into a simplified 3-hour pass.
- New reduced fares and bulk discount programs.
- An increase in the cost of a monthly pass.
- Implementation of a fare increase to paratransit service that the DART Board approved but did not enact in 2018.
- No increase in the cost of a day pass.



DART customers opting to not purchase an all-day ticket would pay for a 3-hour pass covering rail and bus service instead of midday AM and PM service passes under the proposed restructured fare.

Construction Updates

Progress continues with installation of bridges, completed roadways and Silver Line stations taking shape

The biggest obstacle in construction of the DART Silver Line Regional Rail project is coming to a completion with the reconfiguration of the rail guideway in North Dallas. A mandatory year-long closure of Hillcrest Road has been in effect since February 2024, allowing for the reconstruction of the roadway underneath the rail guideway, which will remain at grade level.

Archer Western Herzog (AWH), the design-build contractor, had its construction crews excavate almost 18 feet of rock and soil to build a new Hillcrest Road between McCallum Boulevard and Meandering Way. The excavation is complete, and crews spent a large portion of August building the retention walls underneath, finishing the construction of a pump station to eliminate the threat of floods from heavy rain and began the setting and installation of the eastbound and westbound rail bridges along with the adjacent pedestrian bridge.

The pedestrian bridge will provide a pathway connecting users to both sides of the Cotton Belt Regional Trail, which will run adjacent to the Silver Line throughout most of the corridor. Noise and betterment walls, which are over 80% installed in the North Dallas area, will separate the rail from runners, walkers, and bikers on the trail.

Hillcrest Road is scheduled to reopen in January 2025. Construction of the trail in the North Dallas area is expected to begin in early 2025, and is anticipated to be open around the start of Silver Line revenue service in late 2025 to early 2026.

AWH crews worked to finish several tie-ins for water line work along Coit Road. This allowed for the opening of new roadway in late June, which raised Coit Road and alleviates the need for rail crossing gates and signals with the Silver Line track located underneath.

The traffic shift now has AWH working on the southbound roadway, which is scheduled to be completed by Q2 2025. The installation of a functioning traffic light on Coit Road was approved and completed by the City of Dallas in early August.

Also in Dallas, AWH crews began pouring concrete on the driveway and parking lot area of the Cypress Water Station as well as installing passenger information displays (PIDs), electrical housing for ticket vending machines (TVMs) and finishes on the station platform. The installation of track connecting Cypress Waters to the existing rail in Grapevine and Carrollton began in September and will allow for segmented testing through Segment A, between Terminal B at DFW Airport to just past the Knoll Trail Station, to occur in Q4 2024.

Progress continues near the Downtown Carrollton Station with platform finishes giving the station definition and prep work along the guideway allowing for continued track installation going into October. The rail bridge at Old Mercer Yard is over 80% complete with track placement for freight rail underneath the rail bridge and at the Madill crossover nearing completion, helping advance the schedule for segmented testing.

