

spaces, recreational areas, trails, wildlife and waterfowl refuges and historic properties will be tabulated and mapped as required.

Should any Section 4(f) or 6(f) properties be impacted by the proposed project, a Section 4(f) or 6(f) certification statement will be prepared to comply with regulatory requirements, and will be included in the LEA. These statements will include a description of the proposed project; the purpose and need for the proposed project; a description of, and impacts to, the Section 4(f) or 6(f) property; avoidance alternatives and measures to minimize harm.

As part of the Section 4(f) or 6(f) certification, avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation treatments must be thoroughly documented. If Section 6(f) properties are involved, this will require the approval of the NPS, and mitigation will typically involve replacement in-kind of any lands taken by the project, as determined in cooperation with the agency that administers the affected parkland.

3.5 Parklands and Recreational Facilities

This section evaluates impact assessments and mitigation treatments for parklands and recreational facilities within the proposed DART Rail to Rowlett Corridor. In Section 2.4, an inventory for all parklands and recreational facilities in the study is described. Both acquisitions and indirect impacts to parklands and recreational facilities are reviewed below.

Impact Assessment

A resource protected under Chapter 26 of the *Texas Parks and Wildlife Code* would be impacted if any of the following circumstances exist:

- A protected resource is permanently acquired by a project
- A temporary use of the protected resource is considered adverse (e.g. protection of the resource would be impaired due to temporary use)
- An indirect impact to the protected resource. An indirect impact occurs when a project generates effects due to proximity (e.g. noise impacts) and these effects are so severe they impair protection or utility of the resource

Of the parks and recreational facilities recorded within the study area, three parks and two bicycle trails fall adjacent to or intersect the proposed alignment. These include the following:

- Heritage Park
- Rowlett Creek Greenbelt
- DORBA Off-Road Trails
- Pedestrian/bicycle trail
- Katy Railroad Park

Acquisitions. The proposed DART Rail to Rowlett would require no permanent acquisitions from protected parklands or recreational facilities. All permanent project improvements within these protected areas would lie within existing MKT ROW. As a result, there are no direct impacts to these resources under the provisions of Chapter 26.

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Temporary Use. Construction of the proposed project would primarily occur within the DART owned ROW. The Rowlett Creek Greenbelt would require temporary easements for construction.

From Centerville Road to just before Dexham Road the LRT tracks would be elevated to cross the Rowlett Creek floodplain. The temporary construction easements of property in the Rowlett Creek Greenbelt Parkland and trails would be sensitive to the resource and natural environment. Appropriate warning systems and barriers would alert pedestrians and bicyclists of temporary construction activity. Indirect impacts in the form of access, noise, and visual aesthetics as it relates to city ordinances and parkland visitor safety and comfort would be considered in the construction process. DART would comply with all landscape ordinances for the City of Garland and City of Rowlett within the ROW and for areas where the proposed project requires temporary construction easements.

Indirect Impacts. Indirect impacts to protected resources include inadequate access to the resource, diminished safety to people while using the protected park or facility and visual and noise impacts as a result of the activity of the proposed alignment.

Access. The proposed DART Rail to Rowlett is not expected to hinder connectivity for parks or bicycle trails.

- **Heritage Park:** The Park is directly adjacent to the DART-owned ROW at the existing DART Downtown Garland LRT Station. The main road access at Fifth Street has an established street crossing for DART traffic to the DART Downtown Garland Station. Visitors to the park are primarily attending the museum and historical buildings which limit pedestrian activity at the resource. There would be no access impacts for Heritage Park.
- **Rowlett Creek Greenbelt and DORBA Off-Road Trails:** The LRT tracks would be elevated beyond the extent of the park. The existing MKT trestle bridge at the Rowlett Creek floodplain has been established in the park. After temporary construction of the planned LRT Bridge, access within the park would be similar to the pre-construction environment. Off-road trails temporarily displaced by construction of the bridge would be accessible after the duration of construction. Centerville Road would be one nearby access point that could require street signals and traffic control. The three-lane configuration in each direction of Centerville Road would provide sufficient capacity for potential traffic to access the park from a parking lot at Castle Drive or other locations. Dexham Road, on the east side of the floodplain, would also be a potential access point which has adequate traffic lanes for grade crossing. No permanent access impacts for the Rowlett Creek Greenbelt or off-road bike trails would ensue after the proposed project construction completion.
- **Katy Railroad Park:** The resource is on the southern end of the DART ROW surrounded by neighborhoods and warehouses. Recreational fields within the park are primarily accessed by vehicles with two major access points at Dexham Road and Rowlett Road, which is a grade separated crossing. No impacts to access for Katy Railroad Park would occur.

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Safety. Safety and Security for the proposed project is discussed in Section 3.2. Parklands and trail safety are not expected to be impacted by the Proposed DART Rail to Rowlett. The historical presence of the ROW has created natural barriers to entry from parks in the form of trees and other vegetation. DART would work with the cities of Garland and Rowlett to ensure safety along the alignment and at road crossings with fences, traffic signals, and other safety devices. Heritage Park, near the DART Downtown Garland LRT Station, has a ditch, fence, and parking lot separating the resource from the alignment. The elevated bridge over the Rowlett Creek Greenbelt and off-road trails would establish a safety barrier for pedestrians at or near the resources. A 50-foot vegetation buffer separates the alignment from Katy Railroad Park.

Visual. There would be minimal impacts to visual aesthetics for parkland and trail users. The historical presence of the alignment and bridges, and the existing DART Downtown Garland LRT Station has established a visual perception of the parkland environment near the railroad. The proposed bridge project at the Rowlett Creek floodplain would create temporary visual disturbances during construction and minimal impacts after construction as the bridge is currently active. Minimal visual impacts after construction could include more frequent spotting of rail traffic and added bridge infrastructure intersecting the Rowlett Creek Greenbelt and off-road trails. The vegetation buffer previously discussed at the Katy Railroad Park would prevent visual impacts for parkland users.

Noise. Noise impacts at parklands and off-road trails would primarily occur during temporary construction. The bridge construction at the Rowlett Creek floodplain would involve some noise intensive equipment such as bulldozers and pavement breakers. The short duration of construction equipment would limit noise annoyances for parkland and trail users and alert them of safety precautions in construction areas. Parkland and trail visitors are subject to noise impacts from residential activity, major and minor roads and SH 66, and existing freight operations. The proposed DART Rail to Rowlett would have minimal noise impacts for parkland and trail visitors.

Mitigation Treatments

Mitigation would be considered for temporary or indirect impacts to parklands and off-road trails. While no permanent impacts to parklands would occur, temporary construction at the Rowlett Creek floodplain would require mitigation strategies that could include the replacement of trees if disturbed and noise and vibration control techniques.

3.5.1 Chapter 26 Coordination Efforts

Several individuals and agencies were consulted in accordance with Chapter 26 for parklands and recreational facilities, including:

- USFWS
- TPWD
- Garland Parks and Recreation
- Dallas County Parks and Recreation
- Rowlett Parks and Recreation

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**DART Rail to Rowlett
Final Local Environmental Assessment**

The above agencies were given the opportunity to review on the Draft LEA. Comments were received from the City of Rowlett and the City of Garland. These comments are detailed in Chapter 5.

3.6 Transportation Facilities

3.6.1 Traffic, Circulation, and Parking Impact Assessment

The existing roadway system in the proposed DART Rail to Rowlett Corridor includes a network of arterial and local streets (**Figure 2-14**). On the west end of the corridor, in downtown Garland, the proposed alignment runs along Walnut Street. East of the GP&L driveway, the proposed alignment generally parallels SH 66, though several blocks away. It crosses multiple roadways on its way to downtown Rowlett, including North First Street, Lavon (SH 78), SH 66, Centerville Road, Dexham Road, and Rowlett Road. In the City of Rowlett, the proposed rail alignment generally parallels Main Street until its crossing of the proposed Martin Drive extension southward across the LRT tracks to Main Street. The proposed DART Downtown Rowlett LRT Station would be located just west of Martin Drive.

In the entire corridor, peak period congestion is concentrated in downtown Garland, on SH 66, and on Rowlett Road. As discussed in Section 2.5.1, many of the roadway segments in these areas currently operate at the minimum acceptable LOS (LOS D) on a typical weekday. In addition, many of the roadways are at their ultimate build-out conditions, so reconstruction cannot mitigate current conditions or handle the growth of traffic that is projected to occur in the future.

Local Streets

Extending the LRT would help reduce roadway congestion in the corridor along SH 66, Centerville Road, and Rowlett Road; however, some localized areas may experience limited increases in traffic congestion due to the introduction of gates at LRT grade crossings. The gates would create brief interruptions to the flow of traffic to allow for the safe crossing of LRT vehicles. In addition, the construction of a Park & Ride lot, an LRT train station, and the traffic they would attract, could have some limited impact on traffic operations near those locations. These impacts are defined in greater detail in the following sections.

Arterials

Congestion delays can be expected on many of the arterials in the study corridor by 2025, even with the LRT Alternative in place. **Figure 3-1** and **Table 3-3** show the anticipated 2025 ADT on many segments of the local arterials in the proposed DART Rail to Rowlett Corridor for the No-Build and Build Alternatives. The table also shows the roadway LOS that would be experienced on each segment under the Build LRT Alternative.

With the LRT Alternative fully operational in 2025, half of the arterial segments would experience small decreases in ADT, while less than half would experience small increases in ADT. As expected, traffic volumes on SH 66, Centerville Road, and Rowlett Road decrease by

