Running Right on Course

Garland Light Rail, Bridges, and More

The DART Blue Line Extension is on track to open as scheduled, in December 2012. Along with laying track, we’re also building major structures. The following are complete:

Rainbow Estates Sound Wall
The sound wall at Rainbow Estates in Garland is complete. The wall is the only sound wall built as part of this project.

Rowlett Road At-Grade Crossing
After a seven-day full road closure, during which work proceeded 24 hours a day, the light rail tracks have been fully installed. There will be no further full road closures on Rowlett Road.

Rowlett Creek Bridge
The construction of the longest bridge on the Blue Line Extension is now complete – and it contains more than 4,400 cubic yards of concrete, 10,804 cubic feet of concrete beams, and 27 columns.

Aside from the sheer amount of work involved in placing girders and creating deck space for these bridges, we’ve developed detailed traffic-control plans to keep traffic moving during the closure of major roads and state highways. These plans require careful coordination between the City of Garland, the City of Rowlett, DART, and Austin Bridge & Road.

Street closures are being communicated to the public through construction alerts from the City of Garland; postings on the DART and Austin Bridge & Road websites; door hangers being distributed within the impacted communities; one-on-one meetings with impacted businesses; and, in some cases, public meetings. To know what’s going on in your community, sign up for traffic alerts at DART.org.

Safety Around Construction Zones

Do not walk, ride or play in a construction area.

Construction zones are busy places where dangerous work is taking place. For safety reasons, Rowlett and Garland residents should avoid construction zones and obey posted signs.

It is important that parents and teachers teach children about the dangers that construction sites pose. Heavy equipment operators could easily miss seeing a child and large construction vehicles pose extreme danger.

Rowlett Blue Line Extension Facts at a Glance

- 4.5-mile extension from downtown Garland to downtown Rowlett
- Total cost: $360 million
- Scheduled opening: December 2012
- Trains will also run more frequently during special events
- Travel time to downtown Dallas will be approximately 36 minutes
- Space is provided for bicycles on both trains and buses
- The Downtown Rowlett Station will feature new-generation, quicker ticket machines

Four light-rail bridges are being built in Garland. Combined, they include more than 50,000 square feet of deck space, over 425,000 pounds of reinforced steel, and more than 6,400 linear feet of superstructure precast girders.

Those structures are:

- KCS Light Rail Bridge – anticipated completion: October 2011
- SH-66 Light Rail Bridge – anticipated completion: August 2011
- Commerce Street Light Rail Bridge – anticipated completion: August 2011
- S.H. 78 Bridge – anticipated completion: August 2011
It was a fun and festive atmosphere on June 18, when DART and Austin Bridge & Road hosted a Play Day in the Rainbow Estates neighborhood of Garland. The event featured food, entertainment and giveaways, as well as being a kind of “pre-celebration” for the opening of the DART Rail extension to downtown Rowlett in December 2012. Underlying the fun was a serious message: As construction activities continue—and just as much so after the Blue Line is fully operational—safety is key.

DART dubbed the event “Play Safe Day,” and it was well attended, with entertainment from Radio Disney and bounce houses, as well as goodies from sponsors Walgreens and Dos Banderas. Both Garland and DART Police officers (plus their four-legged friends from the K-9 unit) were on hand to spread the safety gospel.

It was all part of DART’s redoubled efforts to reach out to the Garland and Rowlett communities with face-to-face safety education programs. Since March alone, we’ve delivered more than 15 such programs at area elementary and middle schools, senior health fairs and other venues.

The signs of progress along the Blue Line corridor are hard to miss: dirt flying, tracks being installed, concrete being poured, bridges being constructed, trucks moving. Keep in mind that the safest way to move through the busy construction zones is to stay focused and avoid distractions.

DART and its prime contractor, Austin Bridge & Road, have placed an array of signs (electronic, detour, and traffic control signs) to ensure that you have a safe and accident-free drive in and around the construction zones. So stay alert and move with caution while traveling through the construction zones.

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Blue Line Project
www.DART.org/about/expansion/blue.asp

Website & Social Media

“Working with the engineering and support staff from the partnering cities allows each party to learn more about each other’s design standards, thus allowing for better collaboration,” Patel says. He points out that the lessons learned from the project can be carried forward by all the parties involved.

**Spreading the Safety Gospel**

**Perfecting the Art of Design-Build**

Anuj Patel is Austin Bridge & Road’s Design-Construction-Interface Coordinator, which means every day, he makes sure the project’s construction jibes with its intended design. He ensures that the construction meets guidelines established by DART and the partnering cities of Garland and Rowlett, while also guaranteeing the finished product meets DART’s design criteria.

The Blue Line Extension is being built under a “design-build” contract—a project delivery method in which the prime contractor is responsible for both design and construction. It’s a fairly new approach to transit projects in North America, and Patel takes great pride in helping DART and Austin Bridge & Road master it.

“The team and DART have worked together every step of the way to achieve a common objective: coming in under budget and on schedule,” Patel says. “The new approach has allowed just that—a fast-track yet cost-effective project, which is why DART opted for design-build in the first place.”

Beyond the benefits to Austin Bridge & Road and DART, there are benefits to the cities of Garland and Rowlett, as well.

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