

Date: February 2022

Bachman Area Planning Technical Memorandum



Subject: Transit Service Coordination

Background

The City of Dallas has requested assistance from the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) in addressing transportation issues in the Bachman/Love Field area of Northwest Dallas. Transit service is a key component of the transportation system for the general study area as well as new proposals for ground transportation access into Dallas Love Field airport. This memo discusses the existing context of mass transit service in the area, planned improvements, and opportunities for transit-oriented development (TOD). The document is organized with the following sections:

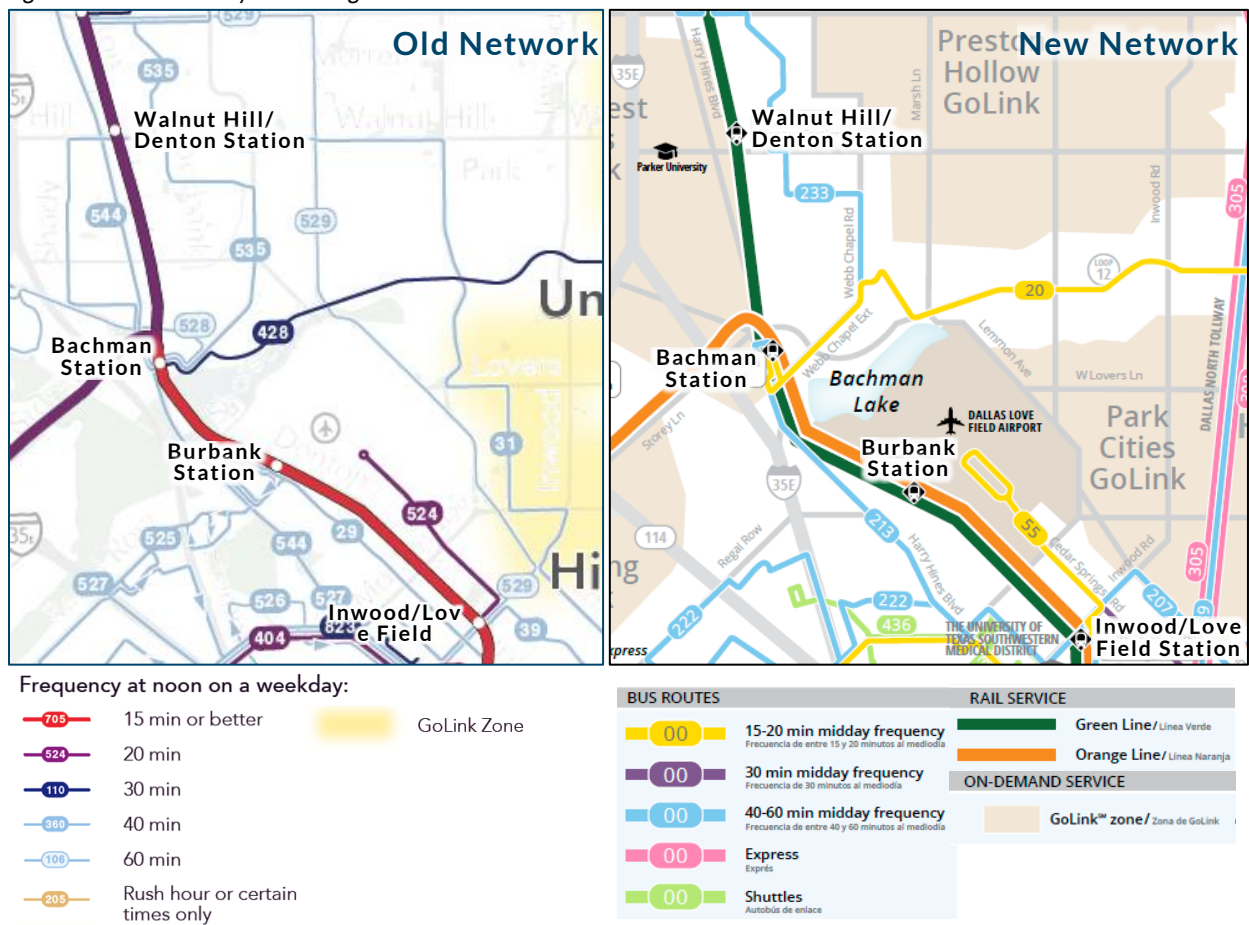
Dallas Area Rapid Transit Bus Network Redesign	2
Automated Bus Upgrade to Love Link.....	3
Love Field Airport Second Entry Transit Technology Study.....	4
Transit-Oriented Development and DART Park-and-Rides	4
Recommendations	5

Dallas Area Rapid Transit Bus Network Redesign

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) recently implemented an entirely redesigned bus network in January 2022. Public engagement and data analysis to evaluate improved job access and bus performance continued throughout 2020 and 2021 to draft the network. Key changes included less focus on coverage and higher focus on ridership, better frequency and longer service hours, more direct routes, increased coverage with GoLink zones, better timed connections, and a much higher focus on access to jobs by transit.

As seen in Figure 1, several minor routes in the study area were discontinued in favor of more direct routes, which are still within reasonable walking distance. The bus line that runs along Northwest Highway closest to Bachman Lake is now to runs through the Bachman neighborhood to better serve residents and commercial uses. Bus service on Marsh Ln/Lemmon Ave has been replaced by GoLink Zones. This is also the case for bus service on Harry Hines Blvd north of Bachman Station and south of Royal Ln. Additionally, light rail peak service frequency was restored to 15-minute service as part of the January 2022 service change, resulting in a combined frequency of 7.5 minutes at Burbank and Bachman where both Green and Orange lines operate. Figure 1 shows maps of the existing and planned DART network in the study area.

Figure 1: DART transit system changes



Automated Bus Upgrade to Love Link

The DART bus Route 55, known as “Love Link,” connects the DART Inwood/Love Field light rail station to the Love Field Airport Terminal. As part of a national effort to advance the development of automated buses, DART is planning to deploy four automated electric buses in 2024 or 2025 on the route. The Regional Transportation Council recently approved \$1.75 million in funding to support the implementation of this automated bus service as part of NCTCOG’s regional Automated Vehicle (AV) Infrastructure and Service deployment (AV 2.2/2.3) program. Two charging stations will also be installed at the Inwood Road/Love Field station to support opportunity charging while the vehicles are in service. Roadway improvements (such as the potential for the AV dedicated or limited access shared lane) and installation of Traffic Signal Priority traffic signals will be required as part of the scope.

Figure 2 displays the Love Link route from Inwood/Love Field Station to the Love Field Airport terminal.

Figure 2: Love Link Route



Love Field Airport Second Entry Transit Technology Study

The City of Dallas Department of Aviation is reviewing, at the request of the City Council Transportation Committee, transit technology options for the possible second entry to Love Field Airport. The study is a high level look at possible feasible transit options usable for a second entry in addition to the DART bus Route 55, “Love Link,” service via the existing entrance. The City of Dallas is coordinating with DART on the possibility of this new service connecting to the existing DART light rail service at Bachman Station. The goal of the study is to ensure future projects are compatible and would not preclude future transit options from being developed. The study includes right-of-way evaluation and assessment of infrastructure and dimensional needs for various transit options.

Transit-Oriented Development and DART Park-and-Rides

The Bachman and Walnut Hill/Denton stations both include park-and-ride lots that may present an opportunity for future transit-oriented development (TOD). A 2019 evaluation of DART property¹ indicated Bachman Station has 458 parking spaces with 27 percent peak utilization while Walnut Hill/Denton Station has 269 parking spaces with only 3 percent of them being used on average. That same property analysis ranked these properties 35 and 36 out of 47 in terms of their marketability for development.

In recent years DART has undertaken agreements with city governments and commercial real estate developers to redevelop park-and-ride lots, such as Trinity Mills Station in Carrollton, SMU/Mockingbird Station in Dallas, Arapaho Station in Richardson, and the Addison Transit Center to transform them into TOD. Each of these properties ranked higher in terms of their marketability than Walnut Hill/Denton and Bachman stations. They all also required partnership from the city where the park-and-rides lots were located. If aligned with enough public incentives and city coordination, there is long-term potential for TOD on Walnut Hill/Denton and Bachman DART stations park-and-ride properties.

In November of 2021 the Dallas City Council and the DART Board established a memorandum of understanding initiating a process for the City to eventually redevelop five selected DART station park-and-ride lots in Dallas. This will allow the City to market the parking lots through a request for development proposals in coordination with DART and streamline the process needed to catalyze TOD at each station. Given the unique context of additional public properties near the DART Bachman and Walnut Hill/Denton stations, a TOD area plan may be beneficial to explore how to best position the area for future development.

Recommendations

Technology enhancements to DART's Love Link Route 55 bus service connecting the Inwood/ Love Field Station to the Love Field terminal are in progress with support from the Regional Transportation Council. The City of Dallas and DART should continue to coordinate with each other on the possible second entry to Love Field Airport and how transit access might be included. It's also recommended that the preferred transit options identified by the City be communicated to those engaged in roadway planning for the second entrance as to avoid design conflicts.

To advance TOD the ongoing discussions between City of Dallas and DART staff on TOD concepts for citywide TOD strategies should continue including possible use of agreements with DART to catalyze TOD on public land in this study area. A station area plan for Bachman and Walnut Hill/Denton stations may also be a useful tool to begin that process.