

Media Contact:
Morgan Lyons or
Robin Stringfellow

October 16, 1997

More trains being ordered

DART buying more light rail vehicles to serve current, future riders

DART Rail ridership continues to grow and the transit agency is ordering more light rail vehicles (LRVs) to accommodate that growth and to prepare for expansion of the system to Garland, Richardson and Plano.

DART's Board of Directors approved a contract for \$93.43 million to purchase the 34 new vehicles from Kinkisharyo of Japan, the manufacturers of DART's current fleet of LRVs. Each of the new cars will cost \$2.7 million and will be paid for through short-term debt. The first of the new cars is expected to be in service on DART's 20-mile rail system by June 1999. Those cars and up to 21 additional cars expected to be ordered later this year will be placed in service on DART's Northeast Corridor extension to Garland in 2002 and North Central extension to LBJ Freeway in 2001, Richardson in 2002 and Plano in 2003.

Nearly 35,000 people travel on DART's light rail system each weekday. DART President/Executive Director Roger Snoble said the new trains will help relieve crowded conditions on some rush hour trips. "While standing room only trains is a nice problem for us, it is hardly an ideal situation for our passengers. In fact, we're concerned it may discourage some people from trying the rail system. The new trains will be a big help."

In the short term, Snoble said DART staff continues looking for compatible trains which can be leased and put into service more quickly than the new DART trains. "We are literally searching the world over for spare trains."

DART operates a fleet of 40 electric-powered LRVs. Each of the current and planned LRVs seats 76 passengers with a standing room capacity of 160 passengers. The rail cars are wheelchair accessible and can carry as many as four wheelchairs.

Trains operate seven days a week from 5:30 a.m. to 12:30 a.m., and run every 5 to 10 minutes during peak or rush hour and about every 20 minutes during off-peak times. The base fare is \$1.00 one-way, and money-saving monthly passes are available at many locations throughout the DART Service Area.

DART's Light Rail Starter System has two lines. The Red Line begins at Westmoreland Station, near the intersection of Illinois and Westmoreland in West Oak Cliff, runs north across the Trinity River,

through downtown Dallas, and then enters a tunnel under North Central Expressway to Mockingbird Lane. From there, trains proceed above ground to Park Lane and Greenville Avenue in North Dallas. This line will be extended to LBJ Freeway in 2001, Richardson in 2002, and Plano in 2003.

The Blue Line runs north from the new Ledbetter Station, across the Trinity River, through downtown Dallas, ending at Pearl Station (Bryan and Pearl). This line will extend north to the Mockingbird Station, then northeast to Garland in 2002.