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**August 20, 2008**

***New downtown passenger plaza honors civil rights pioneer***

## **DART breaks ground on Rosa Parks Plaza**

The new Rosa Parks Plaza will serve as an urban oasis for the West End community of downtown Dallas and meet the needs of 1,400 daily bus customers. U. S. Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson and officials from DART and the City of Dallas broke ground at the site of the facility, the northeast corner of Elm and Lamar, on Wednesday, August 20. It is scheduled to open in February 2009.



*Dallas Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson and DART President/Executive Director Gary Thomas participated in the groundbreaking of the Rosa Parks Plaza, a future DART patron facility. The statue of Parks, which will be a centerpiece of the plaza is shown in the photo between Rep. Johnson and Thomas.*

[High Resolution JPG](#)



*Officials from DART, the City of Dallas, DOWNTOWN DALLAS and Dallas Main, L.P. joined Dallas Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson at the groundbreaking of the new DART Rosa Parks Plaza. Shown left to right, DART Board Vice Chairman Robert Strauss; Joan Walne, Vice President, Dallas Park Board; DART Board Member Angel Reyes, Tom Baker, President, Dallas Park Board; DART Board Chairman Randall Chrisman; Rep. Johnson; DART President/Executive Director Gary Thomas; DART Board Asst. Secretary Pamela Dunlop*

Initially planned as the Elm/Lamar Patron Plaza, the \$1.7 million Rosa Parks Plaza is named for the civil rights pioneer who helped lead the battle to integrate public transportation. The plaza will incorporate four special-design passenger shelters, two bus bays to relieve DART's West Transfer Center, and a pedestrian way to link 65,000 jobs -- located within a half mile south and east of the site -- with the West Transfer Center and the West End Station.

Rosa Parks Plaza will be distinct from other bus transit facilities. It offers a park-like setting, highlighted by a wall with water coursing over the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and a centrally placed bronze statue of Parks. The landscaped area will provide a tranquil place for downtown workers and residents to have lunch and will feature a water fountain that serves pets as well as people.

In addition to \$600,000 in federal funds secured for the project by Rep. Johnson, DART, the City of Dallas Park & Recreation Department, DOWNTOWN DALLAS, and Dallas Main, LP (landlord of Bank of America Plaza) each provided funds to transform a parking lot into the plaza.

#### **Art designed to reflect Parks' strength**

A life-size bronze statue of Rosa Parks sitting on a bus bench will be a focal point of the plaza. San Francisco sculptor Erik Blome created the statue for DART. The statue is designed to "invoke a feeling of determination and a presence that has a solidity to it and a beauty that transcends time," he said. "The seat is filled in underneath to create a sense of solidity and carved rock-like power emanating from her small act of defiance and faith. Her happiness showing in the knowledge that she is doing right."

#### **Plaza latest example of federal support for DART**

The federal contribution was part of a \$10 million funding earmark to support enhanced DART bus passenger facilities. The funds will be used to add shelters and improve the system's most heavily used bus stops with benches, sidewalk improvements and curb cuts for better accessibility. DART has received an additional \$3 million in federal funds for bus facilities.

This year DART is scheduled to receive \$84.5 million as part of the \$700 million Full Funding Grant Agreement awarded by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in July 2006 to help fund the 28-mile DART Rail Green Line.

Earlier this summer DART also received a \$9 million FTA grant to be applied toward the purchase of 537 new buses. The contract for the bus purchase is scheduled for award this fall. The buses, which should begin arriving in 2010, are the latest step in DART's clean fuels program, which has led to a 68% reduction in transit fleet emissions. The new buses will meet more stringent 2010 federal air quality guidelines and reduce current bus fleet NOx emissions - a precursor to ozone pollution - by at least 90%.

DART also will receive \$227,700 in federal funds to develop a Station Master Plan for a multi-modal transit hub located near the future Downtown Carrollton Station. The hub will be located at the

*Gates; Greg Chilton, Dallas Main, L.P.; Dan Blizzard, Chairman, DOWNTOWN DALLAS and Paul Lindenberger, Director of Operations, DOWNTOWN DALLAS.*

[High Resolution JPG](#)



*A life-size bronze statue of Rosa Parks sitting on a bus bench will be a focal point of the plaza. Shown here is a first casting of the statue.*

[High Resolution JPG](#)

junction of the Union Pacific, Cotton Belt, Burlington Northern/Santa Fe and DART Rail lines and would help connect DART and the future rail line of the Denton County Transit Authority.



*This rendering of the Rosa Parks Plaza highlights the park-like qualities of the patron facility. It is designed to be an urban oasis for DART customers and others in the West End section of downtown Dallas.*