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New warning signals alert drivers to nearby trains

DART placing "Trains Coming" signals along Lancaster Road

DART is implementing 22 "Trains Coming" signals at 11 intersections along a three-mile section of its light rail line in Lancaster Road's median.

The signals are posted from Elmore Avenue south to DART's Ledbetter Station at Lancaster Road and Ledbetter Boulevard. Testing is nearly complete and the signals should be in operation by early April.

The electronic signals provide an extra safety measure for drivers using Lancaster Road. Train Coming signs are designed to help prevent motorists from turning across Lancaster directly in front of trains traveling from both directions. The black and gold signals warn of incoming trains operating at 35 mph every 7.5 minutes during rush hour. The trains are linked to traffic signals on Lancaster. They slow to 20 miles per hour in school zones when slower speeds are in effect.

"The signals are sequenced to simultaneously post both the traffic crossing alert and red light," said Tim McKay, DART senior vice president for project management. "They are part of our safety investments in the area." Other safety enhancements include fences and additional signs along Lancaster to prevent jaywalking.

DART's transit education program, first introduced in the area in 1996, is another essential element of the safety campaign. Students at nearby B.F. Darrell and Lisbon Elementary Schools have learned safety tips and many have ridden the light rail trains. The education effort also includes outreach efforts to local PTA's and civic organizations.