

## **DCTA closes on depot property Station to be one of five on commuter rail line**

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By BJ Lewis / Staff Writer, Denton Record Chronicle

The Denton County Transportation Authority acquired the first property related to its A-train project Monday when the group closed on a \$3.2 million deal with Denton Regional Medical Center. The deal gives DCTA 12.8 acres to be used for a rail station for its passenger rail project.

The site, located near the corner of Medpark Drive and Colorado Boulevard in Denton, will serve as the agency's Medpark Station and will include bus and rail transfer opportunities, according to a DCTA news release.

The rail station will be one of five along a 21-mile corridor adjacent to Interstate 35E. Medpark Station will include up to 750 parking spaces. Construction of the station is scheduled to begin next summer, and it is slated to open in December 2010.

The agreement also includes infrastructure improvements that will provide additional access from I-35E to both the hospital and Medpark Station.

"The transaction was a coordinated effort between DCTA, the city of Denton and the DRMC. The hospital has been a great partner throughout the planning of the A-train project and will be an excellent neighbor as we move toward establishing rail service," said Scott Neeley, DCTA's executive vice president of rail development.

Hospital officials never saw any downside to Medpark Station, said Gary Conwell, vice president of business development for DRMC. DCTA could have taken the property through eminent domain, Conwell said, so the hospital wanted to be sure it received fair market value for the property.

"It was one of those cases where it looked like a win-win for everybody -- for the hospital and the county and everyone to get better mass transit access up here," he said.

Another positive from the project is providing work for people, Conwell added.

"This isn't too bad of a time to have a pretty good-size construction project right here in our area. It provides additional jobs, and I think we're all concerned about that right now," he said.

In addition to the five rail stations, the A-train project includes a bicycle and pedestrian trail and an operations and maintenance facility. DCTA's objective is to have full rail service by December 2010 between Denton and Carrollton, where passengers could transfer to Dallas Area Rapid Transit's light rail system.

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