

White Rock North stakes a claim in DART fight

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WRN School makes a move on east side property

The battle over East Side access to the planned DART station in Lake Highlands might be ending soon, thanks to a small private school with big plans.

In a surprising development, White Rock North School agreed to buy the adjacent property to the north from its owner late last month.

DART had planned to use that very land as a pedestrian access point to its proposed Lake Highlands rail station.

DART's plans to provide access through a hike and bike trail sparked months of quarreling among Lake Highlands North neighborhood

residents, as many were opposed to the access point on White Rock Trail.

White Rock North School plans to use the land for additional faculty and parent parking and an enhanced playground area for students.

Rory Nerenberg, a lawyer representing the school, says the purchase addresses several ongoing needs for White Rock North School.

"This is more about needs being met for children and their families and was not simply an effort to thwart DART's plans for the land," said Nerenberg.

"If DART can't move forward with its access plans on that land because of the purchase, it's an added benefit for the school from a safety perspective."

Like many in the Lake Highlands North neighborhood, the school had safety concerns stemming from the planned access point and its proximity to the campus.

White Rock North School has no intentions of allocating any of the property to DART. The additional parking and playground area will occupy all of the new property, which had been in the school's sights for years.

White Rock North will submit an application to the City of Dallas in early August to re-zone the property. Subsequent hearings before the City Planning Commission and City Council are expected before the school is allowed to move forward on its new projects.

Nerenberg says the school wants support from area homeowners throughout the approval process.

"We would love for the community to voice its support for what White Rock North is planning for the land," he said. "It's not a victory until the re-zoning is approved and the school can even better serve its students and faculty."

