

**TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING RECORD**

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Meeting Date: December 14, 2009 **Start Time:** 2:03 p.m. **Adjournment:** 4:07 p.m.

Committee Members Present:

Linda L. Koop (Chair), Sheffie Kadane (Vice Chair), Jerry Allen, Tennell Atkins, Carolyn R. Davis, Angela Hunt, Delia Jasso, Pauline Medrano, Ron Natinsky, and Vonciel Jones Hill

Committee Members Absent:

None

Other Council Members Present:

Dwaine Caraway, David Neumann

City Executive Staff Present:

A.C. Gonzalez, Assistant City Manager
Jill A. Jordan, Assistant City Manager

TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes for November 16, 2009

Action Taken/Committee Recommendation:

Motion was made to approve the minutes for the November 16, 2009 special called meeting subject to corrections. No corrections were suggested and the minutes were approved as submitted.

Made by: Kadane Seconded by: Medrano Passed unanimously

2. DART Briefing on Lessons Learned Regarding Rail Service during State Fair TX-OU Weekend

Presenters: Gary Thomas, Executive Director/President of DART and William Velasco, Chair of the DART Board

Mr. Thomas and Mr. Velasco presented an overview of the lessons learned regarding the rail service during the State Fair TX-OU Weekend. Mr. Thomas noted that there were multiple events at the State Fair on October 17th in addition to the football game, including a Race for Cure event, basketball tournament, and concert, which resulted in a total of 132,000 transit passenger trips that day -- the highest in State Fair history. Mr. Thomas discussed plans to increase bus and train services for the 2010 State Fair TX-OU Weekend, including the possibility of running the Trinity Railway Express service directly

to Fair Park.

Action Taken/Committee Recommendation:

Ms. Koop noted Dallas will be pursuing other large events, such as the World Cup, and wants to make sure DART is able to provide a pleasant transit experience for these events. Ms. Koop asked if DART has looked at how other transit agencies handle major events. She gave an example of changing the direction of I-30 HOV lanes going to and from the Dallas Cowboys games.

Mr. Thomas stated that they have looked at light rail cities such as St. Louis who have hosted the World Series, San Diego, and Denver. There are also plans to look at some of the heavy rail cities.

Ms. Koop stated that she thought it was a good idea to have ticket sales on-site, however, she suggested DART consider advance ticket sales in the future. She also mentioned that there were concerns that trains were full after one or two stops. Mr. Thomas stated they were looking at controlling the number passengers getting on the trains and noted that the large number of passengers on the trains also made it very difficult to get people on and off.

Ms. Koop liked the idea of having a quick response team for rail service, but also suggested having a quick response team for buses. Mr. Thomas stated that they did have buses available, but did not have bus operators on standby.

Ms. Koop suggested that DART work with the City's Streets Department on the possibility of closing streets. Mr. Thomas indicated that in 2008 DART had worked with the Streets Department, but in 2009 DART relied mainly on the Green Line.

Mr. Kadane asked if DART supplied the same number of buses as in previous years. Mr. Thomas stated there were a minimum number of buses provided. Mr. Kadane asked if the Green Line made the full trip at Fair Park. Mr. Thomas stated that some of the trains made a short trip just past Fair Park and that next year the plan will include more use of the Martin Luther King Station.

Mr. Kadane asked if it were dangerous moving such a large number of people on the trains. Mr. Thomas stated that it was not dangerous, but very crowded. He indicated that DART could do more to manage the crowds to make loading and unloading more efficient.

Ms. Davis thanked Mr. Thomas for the Dedication Service done in her district for the Green Line. Ms. Davis asked DART to notify her before any future street closings so that she can keep her district informed. She suggested that DART and the City could do a better job working with the community on the transportation plan.

Ms. Davis expressed concern about the large TRE trains using the tracks into Fair Park. Mr. Thomas stated that most of the areas around those tracks are not residential. However, he stated that DART would work with her before implementing any plans to bring TRE trains directly to Fair Park.

Ms. Davis asked that DART prepare a prioritized list of transit goals and strategies for the 2010 State Fair. She also asked if supervisors were on-site to help direct passengers. Mr. Thomas confirmed that DART supervisors and police were on-site to assist passengers.

Ms. Jasso suggested using volunteer groups, such as the Lion's Club and Rotary Club, to help out during the TX-OU weekend. Ms. Jasso mentioned that if the hotels are dropping people off at different stations, some thought could be given to utilizing some of the stations in Oak Cliff to bring people in to Fair Park.

Mr. Atkins requested that Ms. Koop have DART brief the Committee on their plans 30-60 days prior to the next year's event. Mr. Thomas stated they DART would be available to brief the Committee prior to next year's State Fair. Ms. Koop confirmed that DART would brief the Committee in the summer, just before the State Fair next year.

Mr. Neumann stated how pleased he was with DART efforts and response. He asked if the problem was a planning issue, or if DART just did not have enough buses and trains. Mr. Thomas stated that the problem started with not accurately anticipating the ridership, and then only providing a limited number of buses.

Mr. Neumann asked if the problems reoccurred for people going home after the game. Mr. Thomas stated that it depended on when passengers left Fair Park. Those leaving mid-afternoon did not have a problem, however, those leaving around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m. would have had about a 30 minute wait.

Mr. Neumann asked if all of DART's trains were used. Mr. Thomas stated that they used all of the trains, and that next year; they would need to use additional buses. Mr. Neumann asked if DART might take trains from other areas and use them to provide Fair Park service. Mr. Thomas indicated that DART would look at that; however, most passengers from those areas would also be traveling to the Fair Park area.

Mr. Natinsky suggested that it is DART's success that is bringing these types of problems. He stated that DART has done an exemplary job in spite of the negative press and issues.

Ms. Koop asked if DART has the capacity to move 165,000 people on trains and buses. Mr. Thomas said that they could provide that amount of capacity, however, DART would need to carefully manage bus service to supplement train capacity. Ms. Koop suggested that if DART does not have sufficient capacity, it may want to consider borrowing buses from Ft. Worth. Mr. Thomas agreed that DART could borrow buses from other cities.

Ms. Medrano asked if the game had been scheduled at a later time, would it have helped get people to Fair Park. Mr. Thomas indicated that if the game were later it would have allowed people to spread out their arrival times, but there would have been a greater challenge getting people home. Mr. Medrano asked how soon next year's game time would be known. Mr. Thomas stated that DART knew the game time by September this year. He stated that DART would prepare plans for three different game times.

Ms. Koop thanked Mr. Thomas for the briefing and congratulated Mr. Velasco on his recent appointment as Chair of the DART Board.

No action was taken on this item.

3. Community Gardens and Neighborhood Markets

Presenters: Eric Griffin, Managing Director of the Office of Environmental Quality, Jack Ireland, City Manager's Office, and Janel Leatherman, Marketing Manager for Farmers Market

The Committee was provided a two part briefing on sustainable local food production and distribution. The first part highlighted examples of "community gardens" in Dallas, identified challenges to the development of the gardens, and highlighted other cities that have had success facilitating gardens. Staff recommended action to approve policy language regarding support for local food production and a Development Code amendment creating a Community Garden Land Use. The second part of the presentation concerned "farmers markets." It provided an overview of the vendors at the City's downtown Farmers Market including types of items sold, licenses and fees. Staff made recommendations to develop regulations for the development and operation of neighborhood farmers markets.

Action Taken/Committee Recommendation:

Ms. Koop stated that the development of community gardens is exciting for Dallas and provides opportunity to encourage healthy eating habits.

Ms. Davis stated that she supports community gardens; however, she felt that the farmers needed to do a better job providing educational programs in the schools and that the markets need to be tourist attractions, which would include cooking shows, classes for diabetics, healthy meals, etc. The markets should also have sections with seafood, flowers, and organic foods, making the farmers market an urban market.

Ms. Hunt stated that she had concerns about approving neighborhood markets on basis that they compliment each other and/or the downtown farmers market. She indicated that overly regulating the markets is going in the wrong direction. Mr. Ireland stated that the guidelines presented were not their final recommendations. He stated that he planned to continue research on other cities.

Ms. Jasso stated that she agreed with Ms. Hunt and that she was a strong supporter of letting them grow. She indicated that the City should provide a simple permitting process. She asked those in the audience to stand who were supporting the community gardens. Ms. Koop asked for a list to be passed around to those individuals at the meeting could sign their names.

Ms. Medrano stated that she previously worked for the Texas Department of Agriculture, and mentioned that San Antonio had a rotating farmers market. She indicated that neighborhood markets would be a great supplement to our downtown farmers market.

Mr. Allen stated that the Lake Highland Community Gardens had run into road blocks with the City and said that he supported the review and approval of new rules by the suggested March deadline.

Mr. Atkins stated that he was not against the community gardens, but suggested that we need to keep our focus on the success of the downtown Farmers Market. He said that we need to staff the vacant stalls at the Farmers Market, and suggested the possibility of selling produce from the community gardens at the Farmers Market.

Ms. Hill agreed with Mr. Atkins on keeping a focus on the City's Farmers Market.

Ms. Leatherman stated that the roster had been increased from 50 to 150 farmers at the Farmers Market, and the sheds are full most of the summer. The majority of farmers are at the market on Saturdays. Shed 2 has been remodeled, including the addition of heating.

Mr. Caraway agreed that we should not lose focus on the Farmers Market. We have people moving downtown and we have to create an excitement for them to support the Farmers Market. He stated that we should also find a way to control the birds at the Farmers Market.

No action was taken on this item.

4. Love Field Modernization Program Bond Financing Update, Part 1

Presenter: Dan Weber, Director, Aviation

A briefing was provided to the Committee on bond financing planned for the Love Field Modernization Program with a status report on the bond financing agreements -- special facility agreement, revenue credit agreement, trust indenture, and guaranty. The Council's Finance and Audit Committee will be briefed on January 11, 2010 on the plan of finance, feasibility study, preliminary official statement, and parameters bond ordinance. Full Council consideration will be scheduled for January 13, 2010.

Action Taken/Committee Recommendation:

Mr. Natinsky stated that the risk is with South West Airlines.

Mr. Montgomery, with Southwest Airlines, stated that it is critical to move forward in January 2010 to the Finance and Audit Committee.

No action was taken on this item.

Linda L. Koop, Chair
Transportation and Environment Committee