

JOINT TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AND DART BOARD MEETING RECORD

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Meeting Date: January 24, 2011 **Start Time:** 11:53 a.m. **Adjournment:** 1:39 p.m.

Committee Members Present:

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

Committee Members Absent:

None

Other Council Members Present:

Ann Margolin
David Neumann

DART Board Members Present

William Velasco (Chair), Scott Carlson, Jerry Christian, John Danish, Pamela Dunlop Gates, Robert Strauss, and William Tsao

City Executive Staff Present:

Jill A. Jordan, Assistant City Manager
Theresa O'Donnell, Director, Sustainable Development and Construction
Rick Galceran, Director, Public Works and Transportation
Peer Chacko, Assistant Director, Sustainable Development and Construction

TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA

1. **Approval of Minutes for January 10, 2011**

Action Taken/Committee Recommendation:

Motion was made to approve the minutes for the January 10, 2011 meeting subject to corrections. No corrections were suggested and the minutes were approved as submitted.

Made by: Hill

Seconded by: Atkins

Passed unanimously

2. New Technology for Railcars

Presenter: Gary Thomas, President and Executive Director, DART

Gary Thomas updated the Committee on the development of a new railcar, known as the "New Technology Regional Vehicle," which has many of the operating characteristics of light rail transit vehicles, but is able to share a rail line with freight services.

Action Taken/Committee Recommendation:

Mr. Thomas acknowledged the DART staff seated in the audience: Tim McKay, Kay Shelton, Michael Miles, and Nancy Johnson.

Mr. Atkins asked for a comparison of the proposed new railcar technology to the light rail vehicles in Austin. Mr. Thomas stated that the performance criteria of the new railcars are similar to the light rail vehicles; however, it does not accelerate as fast. However, it is closer in similarity to a light rail transit vehicle than a Trinity Rail Express (TRE) train, which is a commuter rail vehicle. Mr. Thomas stated that he would provide the Committee with the specific performance criteria.

Mr. Atkins also asked if the new technology railcars would be incorporated into DART's existing rail lines or only used outside the city limits. Mr. Thomas stated that the new railcars would not be used on the existing light rail transit system. Their use on any extensions or new lines would have to be carefully considered based on frequency of service, ridership, and other service characteristics.

Mr. Kadane asked if the new railcars were for neighborhood or intercity systems. Mr. Thomas stated that the new railcars could serve both purposes because they can run longer distances, reaching speeds of 70-80 miles per hour, but can also operate in a more urban setting.

No action was taken on this item.

Downtown Dallas Transit Study (D2) Alternative Alignments Update DART 2030 System Plan Update and Related Long Range Financial Forecast

Presenter: Gary Thomas, President and Executive Director, DART

Gary Thomas briefed the Committee on the 2030 Transit System Plan and project status of expansion projects including the Blue Line extension to the UNT-Dallas campus, the second light rail transit line through the CBD (D2), and the Cotton Belt corridor. Steve Salin, DART Rail Planning, assisted in answering questions.

Action Taken/Committee Recommendation:

Mr. Atkins asked if DART has the \$120 million in their Financial Plan for the Blue Line extension to the UNT-Dallas campus. Mr. Thomas stated that the current estimate of the Blue Line extension is \$210 million; the Financial Plan, approved by the Board, identifies \$120 million in debt capacity for the project and leaves about \$100 million unidentified. He indicated that changes in sales tax collections, interest rates, and/or construction costs could change the financial scenario.

Ms. Hill asked for clarification on how the proposed alignment for the Blue Line would affect the Singing Hills community. Mr. Thomas confirmed that the alignment is west of the police substation, near the creek and the Singing Hills Community. He noted that there is no final alignment identified yet. Mr. Thomas stated that alternative alignments are being considered because the Singing Hills neighborhood was concerned about how close the proposed line would be to their community. Mr. Atkins commented that since the original alignment was proposed, a senior housing project has been built in that area, and there is now the possibility of expanding the recreation center.

Mr. Allen asked if DART has already started assembling land for the Blue Line extension. Mr. Thomas stated that DART has not purchased property for the alignment, but that some easements have been defined as a part of zoning approvals.

Ms. Gates commented that placing the rail line west of the police substation would force residents to find alternative ways to access the station. She supported locating the rail station closer to Camp Wisdom Road to provide greater opportunity for additional parking and transit oriented development.

Ms. Hill agreed with Ms. Gates and indicated that it would be more beneficial to put the station near the corner of Lancaster Road and Camp Wisdom Road. She said that she wants to make sure that DART addresses how residents near Ledbetter Road and Houston School Road would connect to the proposed station.

Mr. Kadane asked which alignment would do the most to encourage new development. Mr. Salin stated that DART is working with City staff, who are preparing a Development Plan.

Ms. Koop asked if there would be a need to change street patterns in the area. Mr. Chacko stated that City staff is studying the street patterns and how they might affect development.

Ms. Koop suggested that DART and City staff meet on a monthly basis with Mr. Atkins, Ms. Hill, and Ms. Gates to keep them informed on the progress of the proposed line.

No action was taken on this item.

3. Information Item

2011 Dallas Area Rapid Transit Board Appointment Timeline

Ms. Medrano asked if the six board members whose terms are expiring are eligible to be reappointed again. Ms. Koop confirmed that all members were eligible for reappointment.

No action was taken on this item.

4. Special Recognition to John Brunk

Ms. Koop and Mr. Kadane presented Mr. Brunk with a Special Recognition honoring him for his years of service with the City of Dallas.

Linda L. Koop, Chair
Transportation and Environment Committee