

TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING RECORD

The Transportation and Environment Committee (TEC) meetings are recorded. Agenda materials are available online at www.dallascityhall.com. Recordings may be reviewed/copied by contacting the TEC Staff Coordinator at 214-670-4545.

Meeting Date: May 10, 2010 **Start Time:** 2:02 p.m. **Adjournment:** 4:18 p.m.

Committee Members Present:

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

Committee Members Absent:

None

Other Council Members Present:

Ann Margolin

City Executive Staff Present:

Jill A. Jordan, Assistant City Manager

TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA

1. **Approval of Minutes for April. 26, 2010**

Action Taken/Committee Recommendation:

Motion was made to approve the minutes for the April 26, 2010 meeting subject to corrections. No corrections were suggested and the minutes were approved as submitted.

Made by: Atkins

Seconded by: Allen

Passed unanimously

2. **Long-Range Financial Plan Implications of Revised Sales Tax Projections for DART**

Presenters: Gary Thomas, Executive Director/President, DART and David Leininger, Senior Vice President CFO, DART

The Committee was briefed on DART's review of its 20-Year Financial Plan and the impact that lower sales tax projections have on their rail expansion plans.

Action Taken/Committee Recommendation:

Mr. Bill Velasco, Chair of the DART Board and Dallas Board appointee, stated that the DART Board is looking at alternatives to increase revenue, including applying for various grants, and increasing ridership.

Ms. Koop asked DART staff to explain, so the public will understand, what the new financial projections mean for DART and their rail projects. Mr. Thomas stated that all projects under construction, including the completion of the Green, Orange and Blue lines, and the new bus procurement, have been budgeted and will continue to move forward. He emphasized that it is imperative to fund "state of good repair" major capital projects and to maintain their infrastructure. The capital projects that are not yet obligated include the I-3 line which is the last section of the Orange Line connecting it to DFW Airport, the second LRT alignment through downtown Dallas (D2 Study), and the extension of the Blue Line to the new UNT campus. Mr. Thomas indicated that DART staff is continuing to work with NCTCOG staff on the modeling of ridership estimates for the D2 study.

Ms. Koop stated that the ridership estimates are critical to establishing the cost effectiveness of the proposed downtown lines. She suggested that projects going through center cities could be specifically addressed in the next federal transportation bill. Mr. Thomas commented that the new legislation is not coming out of Congress very quickly, but that it is imperative we get a new transportation bill.

Ms. Koop stated that DART's presentation indicated that it will have \$370 million over the next twenty years for rail line expansion. She noted that the Master Interlocal Agreement (ILA) between the City of Dallas and DART calls for DART to maintain sufficient funding in its Financial Plan for a subway through downtown. Ms. Koop asked if the \$370 million in the presentation was in addition to the funding for the second downtown line. Mr. Thomas stated that the \$370 million for rail line expansion is all that would be available. Ms. Koop indicated that she was concerned about the funds for the downtown line being in DART's Financial Plan.

Ms. Koop asked Ms. Hill to have "Core Capacity" placed on the City's legislative agenda for the next federal transportation bill.

Ms. Davis asked if the financial shortfall from 2-3 years ago had been resolved. Mr. Thomas stated that the previous issue had been related to rapid increases in construction costs. DART went through an audit process with an outside consultant and identified procedures to identify cost shifts more quickly. DART now audits its capital projects on an annual basis.

Ms. Davis asked if the decrease in sales tax was based on changes in ridership. Mr. Leininger stated that the lower projections are based on a lower growth rate for population and employment within DART's service area.

Ms. Davis asked for a list of unobligated projects. Mr. Thomas stated that a summary of unobligated projects was listed on slide 19.

Mr. Atkins was concerned about the Blue Line extension to the new UNT campus. He asked if DART anticipates filing for grants to help fund the project. Mr. Thomas stated that no grants had been applied for yet because the project was further out than the process allows.

Mr. Natinsky asked how many more riders DART can carry on its existing system for the same amount of money spent today. Mr. Thomas stated that he would have to research those numbers.

Mr. Natinsky stated that there are ongoing discussions between the City and the North Central Texas Council of Government as to how the projections for population and employment growth are developed, and that the City believes COG is underestimating growth for the central city area.

Ms. Hill asked how the three unobligated projects had been prioritized and wanted to know how the Blue Line extension to the UNT campus could be moved to the top of the list. Mr. Thomas stated that the priorities had been established many years ago based on population and ridership growth, and that the DART Board would have to approve any modification to the priorities.

No action was taken on this item.

3. Air Quality Standards and Clean Construction Pilot Program

Presenter: Kris Sweckard, Managing Director, Office of Environmental Quality

Mr. Sweckard briefed the Committee on EPA-proposed changes to the air quality standard for ozone and an opportunity to participate in a pilot program to encourage use of "clean" construction vehicles.

Action Taken/Committee Recommendation:

Ms. Koop noted that slide 10 lists voluntary control strategies included in the State Implementation Plan. She indicated that the Council of Government's Air Quality Committee was going to be reconvened shortly to develop additional air quality improvement strategies.

Mr. Kadane asked for confirmation of the engine requirements for vehicles less than ten years old. Mr. Sweckard stated that those requirements were for City contracts.

Mr. Natinsky asked Ms. Hill to include air quality standards and the Clean Construction Pilot Program on the City's legislative agenda.

Ms. Medrano asked who a citizen should contact if they see vehicles idling. Staff said that citizens should call 311, however, a ticket would not be issued unless the City Marshal witnessed the vehicle idling.

No action was taken on this item.

4. Community Gardens

Presenters: Kris Sweckard, Managing Director, Office of Environmental Quality; Theresa O'Donnell, Director, Sustainable Development and Construction, and John Rogers, Assistant City Attorney, assisted in answering questions.

Mr. Sweckard briefed the Committee on an additional zoning option (Option 4) for community gardens intended to allow the gardens on vacant lots while meeting the needs of surrounding property owners, community gardening groups, and the City.

Action Taken/Committee Recommendation:

Ms. Davis stated that she did not agree with the process and would not be in support.

