

TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING RECORD

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**Meeting Date:** June 9, 2008      **Start Time:** 12:03 p.m.      **Adjournment:** 1:38 p.m.

**Committee Members Present:**

Linda Koop (Chair), Sheffie Kadane (Vice Chair), Jerry Allen, Vonciel Jones Hill, Angela Hunt, Ron Natinsky, Pauline Medrano, Caroline Davis

**Committee Members Absent:**

None

**Other Council Members Present:**

David Neumann

**City Executive Staff Present:**

Ramon Miguez, Assistant City Manager

**TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA**

**1. Presentations for the Joint Meeting with the DART Board**

**Presenters:** Gary Thomas, President/Executive Director, DART  
Ernie Martinez, D2 Project Manager, DART

Mr. Thomas briefed the Committee on the status of the Green Line LRT construction and indicated that the project is proceeding on-time and on-budget. He emphasized the economic impact of the Green Line project noting that there are about 2,000 people working on the project with ninety-five percent of those workers local residents. Overall, the project generates over eight million dollars in economic activity.

Mr. Martinez briefed the Committee on the status of the Downtown Transit Study known as the D2 Study. He indicated that the two elements of the study -- the second LRT alignment and the streetcar circulator -- address the overall purpose of the D2 Study. The two major objectives in this effort are to provide system-wide capacity for regional trips to and through downtown, and internal circulation in downtown.

**Action Taken/Committee Recommendation:**

Ms. Koop stated the importance of making a connection between the second downtown LRT line and the new Convention Center hotel. Ms. Koop also stated that

she was very excited about the streetcar program and that she was working with NCTCOG to obtain funding for engineering an initial phase.

Ms. Hunt thanked DART for their work on streetcars and praised the recent streetcar workshop that was held at City Hall.

Ms. Davis asked Mr. Thomas to explain how DART is addressing their budget shortfall. Mr. Thomas summarized the process that DART went through to re-estimate project costs and identify savings. After these steps, there was still a need to use more debt to make up the shortfall. The financial plan assumes using debt backed by fare box revenue and/or federal formula funding, but the agency hopes to get legislative approval to use additional sales tax-based debt. Ms. Davis asked if recent increases in transit ridership would help with their financial shortfall. Mr. Thomas confirmed that ridership was up substantially, but indicated that diesel costs were also up offsetting the increased ridership revenues. Ms. Davis asked what happens with the money that isn't used when there are project savings. Mr. Thomas stated that money is put back into their general fund and becomes available for other projects. Ms. Davis requested that DART provide more detailed information on how Green Line costs have changed between the time the project was first estimated and the current costs.

Ms. Davis asked about the status of transit oriented developments around the Fair Park area stations. Mr. Thomas said that DART does not own much property around its stations, but they often work with developers and encourage them to pursue transit oriented developments. Ms. Davis asked about the status of the grand opening celebrations for the Green Line. Mr. Thomas stated that grand opening celebrations are in the planning process and that he would be able to report more information later. Ms. Davis asked if bus routes would change after the rail lines open. Mr. Thomas answered that there would be bus route modifications at the end of 2009 and again at the end of 2010.

Ms. Hill asked Mr. Thomas to reconfirm that the Green Line on-budget and on-time to open in December 2010. Mr. Thomas confirmed that the line would open on time.

Mr. Natinsky emphasized that the new Convention Center hotel would be important to the City and DART. He encouraged DART to focus on the future now that it has worked through its financial crisis.

Mr. Neumann was pleased that the Green Line was being completed on schedule. He indicated that there is a lot of discussion in the community about streetcars, including a group in Oak Cliff. He is supportive of those efforts and also wants to see good rail transit connectivity to the new Convention Center hotel. Mr. Neumann praised DART for addressing its financial issues and encouraged the DART Board members to keep up their oversight of staff on these issues.

Mr. Kadane suggested that the second LRT line should be running toward the south side of downtown to include service to the Farmer's Market area.

Ms. Medrano asked how many neighborhood safety classes have been conducted in the areas around the construction sites. Mr. Thomas stated that those had been done and are on-going, but he didn't have the information immediately available. Mr. Thomas will follow-up with that information. Ms. Medrano also emphasized the need to address graffiti and trash issues on DART properties.

Ms. Hunt emphasized the need for the second downtown LRT line to be constructed on-time by 2014 and asked for clarification on how DART would respond if the legislature does not approve additional sales tax debt for the agency. Mr. Thomas explained that their 20-year financial plan is based on debt that DART already has the authority to use – borrowing against fair box revenue and federal formula funds. It would be desirable to get access to additional sales tax-based debt, but it is not necessary.

No action was taken on this item.

DART Board Members present at briefing: Faye Wilkins, Scott Carlson, Angel Reyes, Dr. Claude Williams, Jr., Bill Velasco, Randall Chrisman, William Tsao, Robert Strauss, Pamela Gates

## **2. Approval of Minutes for May 27, 2008**

### **Action Taken/Committee Recommendation:**

Motion was made to approve the minutes for the May 27, 2008 meeting subject to corrections. No corrections were suggested and the minutes were approved as submitted.

Made by: Kadane

Seconded by: Hill

Passed unanimously

## **3. DART Board Nominee Interviews**

The Committee interviewed Robert Strauss, Angel Reyes and Lafayette Moses Wilkins as reappointment nominees to the DART Board. The City Council is scheduled to vote on the appointments at their June 25, 2008 meeting.

### **Action Taken/Committee Recommendation:**

No action was taken on this item.



Linda L. Koop, Chair