

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE March 23, 2018

TO Honorable Members of the Mobility Solutions, Infrastructure and Sustainability Committee

SUBJECT **City of Dallas Cotton Belt Resolution**

On Monday, March 26, 2018, you will be briefed on the City of Dallas Cotton Belt Resolution. The briefing materials are attached for your review.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Majed A. Al-Ghafry'.

**Majed A. Al-Ghafry**  
Assistant City Manager

[Attachment]

- c: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
T.C. Broadnax, City Manager  
Larry Casto, City Attorney  
Craig D. Kinton, City Auditor  
Billierae Johnson, City Secretary (Interim)  
Daniel F. Solis, Administrative Judge  
Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, Chief of Staff to the City Manager  
Jo M. (Jody) Puckett, Assistant City Manager (Interim)
- Jon Fortune, Assistant City Manager  
Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager  
M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer  
Nadia Chandler Hardy, Chief of Community Services  
Raquel Favela, Chief of Economic Development & Neighborhood Services  
Theresa O'Donnell, Chief of Resilience  
Directors and Assistant Directors

March 28, 2018

**WHEREAS**, the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) plans to build the 26-mile Cotton Belt Project rail line between Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) Airport and Shiloh Road in Plano; and

**WHEREAS**, the Cotton Belt rail line goes through the cities of Plano, Richardson, Dallas, Addison, and Carrollton; and

**WHEREAS**, the Cotton Belt Project passes through a three-mile section of North Dallas in an area that is mainly residential, and includes many schools and parks near the rail line; and in another area of Dallas known as Cypress Waters that is a proposed mixed used development area; and

**WHEREAS**, the existing Cotton Belt Project has twelve at-grade street crossings in the City of Dallas and one grade-separated street crossing at Preston Road; and

**WHEREAS**, the proximity of residential homes, schools, parks and at-grade street crossings raises significant community safety concerns, as well as issues related to noise, vibration, and visual impacts; and

**WHEREAS**, DART is currently engaged in developing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Cotton Belt Project; and

**WHEREAS**, the DEIS will identify the Cotton Belt Project alignment, grade separations for street crossings, station locations, and mitigation measures required to meet Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirements; and

**WHEREAS**, the DART Board has a “Betterments” policy that provides funding and a community involvement process for enhancements that would be in addition to the mitigation measures required by the FTA; and

**WHEREAS**, the DART Board considered committing \$50 million toward mitigation measures for the Cotton Belt Project in Far North Dallas, but later changed its Resolution language to apply the \$50 million to the entire 26 miles and then approved Resolution No. 060177 in 2006; and

**WHEREAS**, on October 24, 2017, DART staff briefed the DART Board Planning Committee and communicated that the approved language in the resolution was intended for betterments, not mitigation; and

**WHEREAS**, DART did not stipulate in the resolution or subsequent action that the funding amount would be adjusted for inflation; and

March 28, 2018

**WHEREAS**, freight service on the Cotton Belt rail line is not currently permitted within the City of Dallas and Dallas requests written assurances that freight service will never be allowed on the Cotton Belt rail line between Waterview Parkway and the Dallas North Tollway; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2011 City of Dallas Bike Plan identifies a bicycle-pedestrian trail within the Cotton Belt rail corridor between Waterview Parkway and the Dallas North Tollway.

**Now, Therefore,**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DALLAS:**

**SECTION 1.** That the City Council supports the Cotton Belt Project only if the following conditions are approved by the DART Board before a construction contract for the line is awarded:

- Rail stations within the City of Dallas are only provided at two locations, Cypress Waters and Knoll Trail. The Preston Road/Keller Springs and Coit Road stations are eliminated from the project, and
- Grade-separated street crossings are constructed at Hillcrest Road and Coit Road. Infrastructure changes are at-grade or below grade, and
- Mitigation and Betterments are provided throughout the residential communities in Far North Dallas to mitigate adverse impacts including, at a minimum:
  - A. Continuous 15-foot high concrete, sound-absorbing walls that meet the 3dBA Ldn limits at all residences on both sides of the rail line,
  - B. Tire-derived aggregate for track ballast to reduce vibration,
  - C. Enhanced landscaping to reduce visual impacts,
  - D. Double gated, lower height crossings and quiet zones at all at-grade street crossings to improve safety and to reduce noise,
  - E. Train Noise shall not exceed current community noise levels by more than 3dBa Ldn at maximum headways,
  - F. Vibration levels – the standard of reference for human exposure to vibrations in buildings will be ANSI S2.7-1983 (R2006), or 65 vdB peak vibration level,
  - G. Directional crossing bells in all quiet zones that adhere to the lowest/quietest federal safety limits. DART will employ all practical measures to obscure sound intrusions from the bells into the residences, and

March 28, 2018

**SECTION 1.** (continued)

- DART will enter into an Interlocal Agreement with the City of Dallas to assure that freight service will never be allowed on the Cotton Belt rail line between Waterview Parkway and the Dallas North Tollway, and
- Cooperation is provided in the development and implementation of a bicycle-pedestrian trail within the Cotton Belt corridor outside of the sound walls consistent with the 2011 Dallas Bike Plan, subject to neighborhood input.

**SECTION 2.** That the City Council supports the proposed change in alignment and the location of a rail station for the Cotton Belt Project near the Cypress Waters development within the city of Dallas.

**SECTION 3.** That the DART Board increases its \$50 million commitment to provide betterments in residential areas of the Cotton Belt corridor, adjusts the funding amount to reflect inflation since their resolution was approved in 2006, and stipulate that these funds will be used to provide betterments that would be in addition to the mitigation measures required by the FTA.

**SECTION 4.** That the DART Board uses the funds budgeted for the eliminated Preston Road/Keller Springs and Coit Road stations on betterments for the Far North Dallas portion of the rail line.

**SECTION 5.** That this resolution shall take effect immediately from and after its passage in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the City of Dallas, and it is accordingly so resolved.