



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

Through: Mike Land, City Manager

From: Traci E. Leach, Deputy City Manager

Date: July 10, 2018

Reference: DART Cotton Belt Line Discussion

2030: Goal 5 states “Easy access to Dallas-Fort Worth Region” with the following objectives; Objective 1 – Participate in regional rail service to Dallas-Fort Worth, Objective 2- Maintain and enhance accessibility to DFW Airport, and Objective 5 – Develop regional connections for Coppell residents and employees of Coppell businesses

Introduction:

The purpose of this agenda item is to discuss the following issues related to the DART Cotton Belt Line:

- Mitigation improvements desired outside of the scope of those outlined in the draft environmental impact study (DEIS); and
- Cotton Belt Trail critical segment funding; and
- Draft Master Interlocal Agreement for the conveyance of real property

Mitigation Improvements:

The City provided comments to the DEIS that outlined the impacts of the Cotton Belt Line on both the built and natural environments. The DEIS identified impacts that exceed specific thresholds and propose various types of mitigation improvements to address those impacts. The following improvements were identified for locations within Coppell:

- Seven (7) quiet zones to be located at Coppell Rd, Southwestern Blvd, East Belt Line Road, Moore Road, Mockingbird Lane, S. MacArthur Blvd, and Fairway Drive; and
- Grade separation over S. Belt Line Road and Sander Loop; and
- Traffic signal timing/phasing improvements at MacArthur Blvd and E. Belt Line Rd intersection.

No sound walls were proposed as mitigation for any noise throughout Coppell. Mitigation of noise associated with the rail line has been a concern for both the Council and the community, particularly for those that live in close proximity to the line itself. Should additional mitigation improvements be desired, the City would be required to fund 100% of the cost.

Cotton Belt Trail Critical Segments:

A multi-use trail is being proposed to run along the entire length of the rail line. Space within the existing right-of-way has been designated for the 10'-12' wide trail. NCTCOG has been spearheading a regional effort to coordinate the various cities and DART for the trail component of this project. There are several locations that NCTCOG has identified as critical segments, which is defined as a segment that would be impossible to construct if not completed at the time of the rail line construction itself. The trail is not included in the project budget for the rail line. NCTCOG is looking for decisions from the participating cities on whether they are willing to cost-share for the critical segments of the trail. There is one critical segment identified in Coppell- the segment associated with the grade separation at S. Belt Line Road and Sanders Loop.

Master Interlocal Agreement:

As a non-DART member, Coppell will be required to execute an ILA to formalize the roles and commitments of each party as it relates to the Cotton Belt line project. At this time, the master ILA codifies the real estate transaction between the City of Coppell and DART for the rail line right-of-way and for Cypress Waters rail station. Ultimately, the ILA will include specifics regarding what additional mitigation improvements Coppell would like considered/incorporated into the design of the project and what Coppell is willing to fund for those improvements. Each of these additional items will be included as amendments to the master agreement.

Background:

Mitigation Improvements:

- **Sound Walls:** Since no locations within Coppell met DART's threshold for sound wall mitigation, the Council may consider adding walls at locations that are close in proximity to residential areas. For the purposes of the DEIS, the study area for noise mitigation was a distance of 350 to 750 feet from the line, which can be used as a starting point for discussion on locations where sound walls might make the most sense. DART obtained pricing for key components of the rail line construction this summer and those estimates have 12' tall sound walls priced between \$56 and \$68 per square ft. The price jumps to a range of \$58 and \$80 per square ft. for 15' sound wall.
- **Quiet Zones:** While there are seven proposed quiet zone locations in Coppell, there three locations that are not included, S. Denton Tap, Freeport Parkway, and Royal Lane. While Royal and Freeport have mostly industrial uses adjacent to the rail line. When the rail line was originally planned to stay along the existing freight corridor, Denton Tap was included as a quiet zone. However, with the line deviation south for the Cypress Waters station, this location was removed, as it pulled the noise associated with passenger service too far south to meet DART's mitigation threshold. DART estimates for additional quiet zones is just short of \$650,000 per location.
- **Aesthetic Upgrades:** The grade separated crossing at S. Belt Line Road will not have the typical appearance of a bridge in Coppell. While staff did include aesthetic upgrades as part of the comments related to visual mitigation, it is not known at this time if the DART Board

will include those upgrades as part of the project cost. Matching the character of the surrounding development is an important value to DART. The cross-section detail has been sent to DART for their reference. Cost estimates for this upgrade are unknown at this time.

Cotton Belt Trail Critical Segments:

- **Critical Segment:** There are 4.3 miles of trail proposed through Coppell for the Cotton Belt trail. Of this, one mile is identified as a critical segment along S. Belt Line Road and Sanders Loop elevated crossing. NCTCOG estimates that the cost to construct this critical segment is \$4,326,143. Of this amount, there would be federal funding for a large portion of the cost (80%), plus Dallas County has indicated that it will match up to 50% of the city share for each of the critical segments. For Coppell, with the various funding known at this time, the cost would be \$432,614.50. NCTCOG is looking for confirmation from participant cities of whether each is willing to fund their share for the critical segments. The timing for this decision is driven by NCTCOG, which is taking the critical trail segments to their technical committee in July, with the NCTCOG and RTC Board presentation and approval in August and September.
- **Non-Critical Segments:** There are two segments through Coppell that are not considered critical. The decision-making process for these segments is not time sensitive. However, it is important to know that the total cost for these two segments, which combined total 3.33 miles of trail, is \$9,719,315. The potential funding scenarios are unknown at this time. NCTCOG is estimating a cost savings for participant cities of approximately 30% if construction of the trail is completed concurrently with the rail construction. Staff is recommending that these segments be placed in the CRDC work plan for the future.

Master ILA:

Staff has been working with DART representatives to draft the Master ILA. At this time, the draft before you includes only the details for the real estate conveyance for the rail right-of-way and the station itself. Coppell's commitment towards the project has always been the donation of land for the purpose of facilitating the Cypress Waters alignment to pull the rail away from some of the residences. The location for the Cypress Waters station is built around the location of the city-owned land. Staff will be ordering an appraisal for the tracts to determine the value and the ILA will provide the vehicle through which the transaction can be completed.

Legal: The City Attorney has reviewed the draft ILA.

Fiscal Impact: Varies, depending on the improvements identified by the Council. There will be on-going maintenance associated with any improvements discussed here.

Recommendation: Staff will be looking for direction from the Council related to the critical trail segments and the master ILA. Decisions related to the sound attenuation efforts do not need to be finalized at this meeting.