



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mayor and City Council

**Through:** Mike Land, City Manager

**From:** Traci E. Leach, Deputy City Manager

**Date:** January 9, 2018

**Reference:** DART Rail Update

**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 Coppel residents and employees of Coppel businesses

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### Introduction:

Since the Council last took action to approve the resolution supporting the Cypress Waters alignment, several preliminary steps in the process have occurred. DART completed the 10% plans for the rail corridor and released the Draft Street At- Grade Crossing Traffic Analysis Report. (rail crossing at S. Beltline Road is proposed to be elevated and MacArthur Rd. will see signal/intersection improvements). City staff have been actively involved in the review of these two documents and have provided comments to DART. Additionally, it appears that the Cypress Waters alignment has become the only alignment through Coppel proposed at this time. In the next several months, a number of additional key discussions and milestones regarding the Cotton Belt line will take place-release of the draft environmental impact study (DEIS), execution of an interlocal agreement (ILA), and approval of resolution supporting the project. Most of these milestones will require Coppel to carefully discuss and consider what, if any, mitigation improvements we find prudent to request for inclusion within the project scope.

*DEIS:* While DART has completed initial sound, vibration, and visual impact studies, the DEIS is the official document that will formalize those results in preparation for final federal approval. Based on information currently available, staff offers the following observations for consideration:

- Vibration impacts: No residential properties reaching mitigation thresholds.
- Visual impacts: No specific Coppel locations were outlined for visual mitigation (as an example the Wheeler bridge in Addison is an example of a specific location called out that

would require visual mitigation to preserve the existing visual element). However, residential areas along the corridor where no visual buffer exists will be considered for visual mitigation.

- **Sound impacts:** Per DART policy, noise impacts that increase 3dB or greater over existing noise levels will require mitigation as part of the project costs. In Coppell, quiet zones (QZ) were shown to completely eliminate the number of residential homes moderately or severely impacted by horn noise. Staff will be working in concert with DART to make application with Federal Transit Authority for QZ. In regard to potential sound walls, this is an issue that the Coppell City Council will need to discuss, as staff is not anticipating that there are locations that would qualify for required mitigation (ie- over 3dB increase).

*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. 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.

*Resolution of Support:* DART has requested that the cities through which the line will run provide a resolution of support for the project.

#### **Background:**

The Cotton Belt Rail Line will connect the DFW Airport to the cities of Dallas, Carrollton, Addison, Richardson and Plano. Along that route, only the City of Coppell is not a member of DART. In 2017, we saw the advancement of the Cotton Belt regional rail service from its potential construction and activation well beyond the year 2030 in the regional mobility plan, to actual approval, funding and scheduling for service by the DART Board beginning in 2022. While the City is not a member of DART, the City is impacted by the development of the Cotton Belt corridor.

In June 2017, the Council approved a resolution to formally support the Cypress Waters alignment, which will realign a significant amount of the corridor to the south of its existing location between Moore Rd. and S. Coppell through the Cypress Waters/North Lake property. Several design considerations will be considered with this realignment including but not limited to sound attenuation solutions, quiet zones for streets with rail crossings, at grade crossings for the rail as it crosses E. Belt Line and Southwestern and a bridge structure for the rail over S. Belt Line. At this time, the Cypress Waters alignment is the only proposed alignment currently being considered for the Cotton Belt line.

While Coppell is not a DART member city, the Cotton Belt line supports the City's Vision 2030 plan, under the strategy of Special Place to Live, several of the Goals support the City's active participation in regional mobility. Specifically 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.

**Analysis:** Staff will be briefing the Council at a subsequent meeting to discuss in greater detail the areas that may be candidates for sound mitigation once the DEIS has been released. Locations for mitigation will need to be included as part of the ILA that is executed later this spring. As a reminder,

the Council set aside seed funding for sound mitigation improvements in the current fiscal year budget.

**Legal:** No legal review necessary.

**Fiscal Impact:** None at this time. However, any future financial commitment to this project will be for quiet zones, sound attenuation solutions, and possible property dedication for rail right-of-way where these items may be needed or required and are located within the City of Coppell or property owned by the City of Coppell.

**Recommendation:** As this is briefing only, there is no staff recommendation at this time.