



Dallas Area Rapid Transit  
P.O. Box 660163  
Dallas, TX 75266-0163  
214-749-3278

June 1, 2023

Mr. Noah Heath  
TxDOT – PTN Director  
125 E. 11th Street  
Austin, Texas 78701 TX

Subject: Dallas Area Rapid Transit Application to 2023 Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Call for Projects for the Cotton Belt Regional Hike and Bike Trail

Dear Mr. Heath:

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) is sending this letter in support of its submittal of the application for the Transportation Alternative Set-Aside (TA) program for funding of its Cotton Belt Regional Hike and Bike Trail (Trail). The Trail will be a public recreational trail approximately 22 miles long running parallel to DART's upcoming Silver Line Regional Commuter Rail (Silver Line). This letter will provide background and additional supporting information for the Trail.

In 1996, the DART Executive Committee passed Resolution 960034 recognizing the beneficial role pedestrian and bike transportation can play in addressing the transit needs of DART's service area and permitting the use of DART railroad right-of-way for hike and bike trails (reference Application Attachment (N)).

Since 2016, DART has been working toward integration of the Trail with the Silver Line. To this end, DART has initiated engagement and conversations with our diverse residents and community-based organizations (Stakeholders) in order to ensure that equity considerations for underserved communities will be integrated into the construction of the Trail (the Project). DART has conducted approximately 73 public meetings with these Stakeholders discussing how the Project will be coordinated with the planning, design, and construction of the Silver Line. Evaluation of the Trail was also a part of the 2018 Environmental Impact Statement process and received overwhelming public support for its inclusion in the Silver Line construction.

Since 2018, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), Regional Transportation Council, Dallas County, and the seven cities affect by the construction of the Silver Line have awarded DART more than \$100 million in federal and local funding toward the Project engineering design and construction phases along the entire 26-mile Silver Line Corridor. This funding has been programmed in the NCTCOG Transportation Improvement Program. Since 2020, DART has been working cooperatively with the NCTCOG and respective cities along the Silver Line Corridor on the engineering design and construction of the Trail within the DART owned rail right-of-way.

DART is currently coordinating engineering design and construction of the Trail through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and will be entering into necessary agreements with FTA to construct the Trail with awarded funding for the Project. Upon approval of funding by the Texas Transportation Commission, the NCTCOG will coordinate programming the funding into the Transportation Improvement Program. The NCTCOG will also coordinate with TxDOT for the transfer of funding from FHWA to FTA for DART to access the funds for construction.

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DART supports funding this Project as described in the 2023 TA Detailed Application (including the construction budget, and the required local match) and is willing to commit to the Project's development, implementation, and construction. On April 18, 2023, the DART Board of Directors approved Resolution No 230030 (reference Application Attachment (O)) to amend DART's Financial Plan to incorporate the Trail which includes contributions from DART, the NCTCOG, Regional Transportation Council, and other sources.

DART will work collaboratively with the NCTCOG and member cities to identify funding to address cost overruns, if any, for TA funds awarded by the Texas Transportation Commission.

DART will execute agreements with local governments for the maintenance and operation of the Trail within the Silver Line Corridor right-of-way. The development of such agreements and coordination meetings with local governments are currently underway.

If you have any questions, please contact me directly at (214) 749-2836 or by email at [dleggett@DART.org](mailto:dleggett@DART.org).

Sincerely,

/s/ *Dee Leggett*

Dee Leggett  
Executive Vice President/Chief Development Officer  
Development Department

c: Christie Gotti, NCTCOG, Senior Program Manager, Transportation Project Programming  
Kevin Kokes, NCTCOG, Program Manager, Sustainable Development Program  
Sandy Wesch, NCTCOG, Project Engineer, Transportation Department  
Nadine S. Lee, DART, President and Chief Executive Officer  
Elizabeth Reich, DART, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer  
Trey Walker, Vice President, Capital Design and Construction  
David Ehrlicher, DART, Assistant Vice President/Chief Architect  
Darwin Desen, DART, Silver Line Program Manager  
Keith Von Kohn, DART, Silver Line Trail Project Manager  
Michael Cooper, DART, Silver Line Resident Construction Manager