

MINUTES

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL ONLINE INPUT OPPORTUNITY

Cotton Belt Trail Design Funding

Work Program Modifications

Online Public Input Opportunity Dates

Monday, October 12, 2020 - Tuesday, November 10, 2020 – The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) posted information at www.nctcog.org/input for public review and comment.

Purpose and Topics

The online public input opportunity was provided in accordance with the NCTCOG Transportation Department Public Participation Plan, which became effective June 1, 1994, as approved by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the transportation policy board for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and amended on November 8, 2018. Staff posted information regarding:

1. Cotton Belt Trail Design Funding
2. Work Program Modifications

The NCTCOG online public input opportunity was provided to inform and seek comments from the public. Comments and questions were submitted by email at transinfo@nctcog.org, online at www.nctcog.org/input, by mail at PO Box 5888, Arlington, TX 76005 and by fax at 817-640-3028. Printed copies of the online materials were also made available by calling 817-608-2365 or emailing cbaylor@nctcog.org.

Summary of Presentations

Cotton Belt Trail Design Funding handout:

<https://www.nctcog.org/nctcg/media/Transportation/DocsMaps/Involve/InputMeetings/2020/10/Tail-Funding.pdf>

In coordination with the DART Silver Line rail project, a 26-mile regional trail corridor is being designed and will be constructed in various phases. The corridor will run parallel to the Silver Line and connect seven cities across three counties from DFW Airport to Plano.

On September 10, 2020, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approved the following actions needed to complete the design phase of the project:

- Design of 100 percent of the entire trail:
 - Increase RTC award of \$8.2M to \$14.9M
 - Increase use of Regional Transportation Development Credits (TDC) to 3.0 million in lieu of local match
- Construction of strategic critical trail bridge sections will be done with two DART contractors.

- Fund additional safety walls near school locations for \$245K STBG funds. RTC Transportation Development Credits will be used for match.
- Assemble inventory for locations for second DART contractor.
- Administratively amending the TIP/STIP and amending other planning/administrative documents to incorporate these changes.

Work Program Modifications handout:

<https://www.nctcog.org/nctcog/media/Transportation/DocsMaps/Involve/InputMeetings/2020/10/UPWP-Handout.pdf>

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) summarizes transportation activities for NCTCOG’s metropolitan planning area, which covers a 12-county region. The UPWP is divided into five major task areas:

- Administration and Management
- Transportation Data Development and Maintenance
- Short-Range Planning and Programming and Air Quality and Transit Operations
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- Special Studies and System Operations

The modifications in this fourth round of proposed modifications to the FY 2020 and FY 2021 UPWP address new initiatives, project updates and funding adjustments.

The RTC will take action on the FY2020 and FY2021 UPWP modifications in November 2020.

COMMENTS SUBMITTED BY WEBSITE, MAIL, EMAIL and SOCIAL MEDIA

Email

Cotton Belt Trail Design Funding

Paul McManus

The Cotton Belt Rail Trail will be absolutely wonderful in not only providing easy access to DART’s Silver Line, but it will also be a critical addition to DFW’s Trail network and also help to promote more walking, running and bicycling!

Sophie Sun

I’m really excited for this project to be approved!

Susan Kenney

I am very much in favor of the DART Silver Line project and also the Cotton Belt Trail project. I also would like to see light rail in Fort Worth along I-35 corridor connecting the north and south parts of Fort Worth to downtown Fort Worth and I would also like to see light rail connecting North Fort Worth to other parts of the metroplex, such as to Dallas, UT Dallas in Richardson, Arlington, etc.

Rod Scales

These comments are submitted on behalf of North Dallas Neighborhood Alliance and Friends of Preston Ridge Trail (PRT) (which the Line intersects) in the vicinity of Districts 11 & 12. These same comments have been given piecemeal to Jared White previously. For convenience, here is a consolidated list of comments for timely consideration in the design process :

1. Some illumination would be desirable. Light pollution issues possible.
2. How will RR barriers, if any, work for the PRT crossing vs the roadway traffic. Walkers will simply go around road and trail barriers. Why spend on movable mechanical barriers vs a cheaper zig/zag walk thru to slow you to a stop before crossing.
3. Will the landscaping allow for (small) trees to provide some shade for users, but not to interfere with the RR Line. Shade is important.
4. What design devices will be used on the trail to slow down speeding cyclists - a zig/zag barrier across the trail won't work as cyclists will go around it on the grass. And cannot interfere with the tractor mowers
5. On PRT three 4" steel posts were installed at every street intersection. Some ended in the grass, not the trail. We think the concept was flawed and a waste of money. At most, one post in the middle of the trail would suffice. Three posts do not prevent vehicle access as they just go around the posts. Abuse has not been a problem
6. Change metal benches to big stone blocks (Lueder Stone) and not on concrete pads- see those blocks at Willow Greene Condos entrance (Meandering Way/DART line). Victor Stanley metal benches (City standard) run \$3000 installed. Stone blocks run \$300 each.
7. If signage is again 3ft square stone posts, they are NOT practical as designed where the caps protrude 1 " as mower rollover bars knock the caps askew and pull off the underlying masonry (see example at Arapaho/Meandering Way north east corner). Top precast stone caps must not protrude.

And Jared has already confirmed that:
the name will be Cotton Belt Trail
it will be concrete, 12ft wide

Maura Schreier-Fleming

It is most unfortunate and frustrating that the North Texas Council of Governments doesn't have an adequate method to obtain input from the many citizens who will be impacted by DART's Cotton Belt/Silver line. Your website indicates public comments are accepted Oct. 12, 2020 - Nov. 10, 2020 for the Cotton Belt Trail (Silver Line.) The Highlands of McKamy IV & V Board has submitted many comments to DART about its work. DART has our contact information. Yet, the NTXCOG made no effort to contact us to solicit our input on the trails. We learned October 29 that the deadline for input is November 10. You can use this email for future correspondence needing citizen input. We will communicate your need to our 247 HOA neighbors.

We are very concerned and have expressed our concern that our elected officials and governing bodies consider it safe to run 60-90 trains running 45 MPH daily at-grade over the Preston Ridge walking trail. DART proposes a 4 ft chain link fence and pedestrian cages to make this situation safe. We consider this proposed solution inadequate, hazardous and unsafe. DART's answer is that the trail has been there for years and the agreement many years ago allowed at-grade trains. Years ago there were infrequent trains, not the current proposal of

double-tracking 60-90 trains DAILY! A reasonable person would recognize the difference and reject DART's proposal.

We encourage the North Texas Council of Governments to do a better job of outreach if your intent is to obtain citizen input. We hope you will address our concerns and make changes to DART's proposed Silver line.

Summary of response by Carli Baylor, NCTCOG Transportation Department

Ms. Schreier-Fleming,

Thank you for contacting the NCTCOG Transportation Department. We appreciate you providing input related to the Cotton Belt/Silver Line initiatives.

Information related to funding for this project is currently posted for public review during our October online input opportunity, and the comment period does end on November 10. However, you are welcome to contact us and/or submit any comments or questions at any point in time via email, fax, phone, web or postal mail. (I'm enclosing below all of our contact information.)

Additionally, I will make sure the below comments are included in our October online input opportunity minutes, which will be provided to the Regional Transportation Council for review during their next meeting on Thursday, November 12.

Should you have any additional questions related to the Cotton Belt Trail project, I've copied Karla Weaver and Kevin Kokes from our staff on this email.

Submit Comments & Questions to:

Email: transinfo@nctcog.org

Website: www.nctcog.org/input

Fax: 817-640-3028

Phone: 817-695-9240

Mail: P.O. Box 5888

Arlington, TX 76005-5888

Jennifer Mitchell

Highly support trail connectivity along the silver line to the west.

Kathy Nelson

Support! Regional system for alternative modes of transportation especially for the construction of trails is desperately needed to improve the economy and individual well-being in North Texas.

Terry Musar

We are very excited to see the current work on the Cotton Belt Trail and hope we can quickly move forward with the complete extension to Plano. Our current trails have always been busy but our changing work/school environment has gotten more families and commuters in the habit of biking on our trails and they are very, very busy now. It looks to only increase in traffic. So

whatever can be done to complete the Cotton Belt trail as soon as possible will be a huge benefit to all our cities. Can't wait! Fully support this project!

Gary Clinkingbeard

I love the Cotton Belt Trail-great place to exercise safely. Very much support extending it to Plano.

Don Mayo

I am a resident of Grapevine and a cyclist. It is wonderful that the trail will be extended from Grapevine to Plano. Many area citizens will be able to use it to safely access areas that have not been directly available to them. Please continue the good work and strive, with DART, to achieve the proposed completion dates.

Kurt Martin

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Clarence Muller

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Kellie Woolley

Please Fund this project completely and quickly !!! Cyclists need safe routes . My nightmare as a parent and wife would be to get a call saying that my daughter or husband who are both avid cyclists had been killed while cycling on a road.

Ed Dickau

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Scott Briggs

I am a member of several cycling clubs and we would love to see this trail and the connections happen. For the many families who have become cyclists in 2020, this trail would be much safer than riding on the roads.

Edgard A Pinero

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Jeffrey Parry

I use the trails daily. Please continue to expand.

Rosely Altschul

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Rich Curtis

Please approve this trail for a safer cycling corridor

David Repinski

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Tom Geppert

Please fund this important bike trail

Thomas Cecil

As a Dallas resident, I write to generally support the funding request for the Cotton Belt Trail. The linked presentation does not provide an explicit question, but to the extent that the presentation seeks comment on the increased funding request and the strategy of utilizing two contractors, I support the funding and have no comment on the use of an additional contractor.

As the committee is likely aware, outdoor trail use is a popular feature for both residents and visitors alike, improving recreation and commute options.

Joe Malangoni

I am writing in support of additional funding for the design of the Cotton Belt Trail. I use this trail frequently and would love to see it expanded.

Randy Petree

Cotton Belt extension would save lives by keeping walkers and cyclists off busy DFW streets. The pandemic has greatly increased use of the existing trail as there are many new users realizing the physical and mental aspects of exercise

Jeromy Denton

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Mark Solow

I've been organizing and leading year-round weekly MUP rides in DFW for 10-years. I've seen a huge increase in trail usage since Covid 19. I'm sure that you know that there has been record bike sales too. Please continue to fund the Cottonbelt Trail extension from Grapevine to Plano.

Curtis Farrar

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Sharon Haney

All for extending trails

Nancy Cline

Please keep the funding for the Cotton Belt trail on track.

Anna Odum

I am currently looking for a safer riding path as traffic has increased due to our growing community. Please continue to develop bike path.

Salil Shilotri

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Mark Adams

I really enjoy biking on the Cotton Belt Trail and hope we can quickly move forward with the complete extension to Plano. Our current trails have always been busy but our changing work/school environment has gotten more families and commuters in the habit of biking on our trails and they are very, very busy now. It looks to only increase in traffic. So whatever can be done to complete the Cotton Belt trail as soon as possible will be a huge benefit to all our cities. Please do everything possible to complete this project as soon as possible.

Jim Burmeister

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Cyndy Lovejoy

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Shanen Pankrez

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John Sims

I fully support the project to extend the Cotton Belt Trail.

Amy Turner

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Morgan Nichols

This is a great project! I fully support it.

Michael Dubrick

am very excited to see the current work on the Cotton Belt Trail and hope we can quickly move forward with the complete extension to Plano. Our current trails have always been busy but our changing work/school environment has gotten more families and commuters in the habit of biking on our trails and they are very, very busy now. It looks to only increase in traffic. So whatever can be done to complete the Cotton Belt trail as soon as possible will be a huge benefit to all our cities. Can't wait! Fully support this project!

Carole Cross

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Charles Haney

It would be awesome to connect city trails.

Steve Simmons

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Rogelio Gonzalez

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Dan Amos

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Vivek Karnik

With the steady increase in outdoor activities such as biking, walking, running, I feel the expansion of the Cottonbelt Trail from Grapevine to Plano would be an awesome extension to have. Fully support this initiative.

Karen Clark

We are very excited to see the current work on the Cotton Belt Trail and hope we can quickly move forward with the complete extension to Plano. Our current trails have always been busy but our changing work/school environment has gotten more families and commuters in the habit of biking on our trails and they are very, very busy now. It looks to only increase in traffic. So whatever can be done to complete the Cotton Belt trail as soon as possible will be a huge benefit to all our cities. Can't wait! Fully support this project!

Aaron Sturman

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Chris Morgan

strongly support building a MUP trail alongside the new DART Silver Line currently being planned.

David Norris

I am very excited to see the current work on the Cotton Belt Trail and hope we can quickly move forward with the complete extension to Plano. Our current trails have always been busy but our changing work/school environment has gotten more families and commuters in the habit of biking on our trails and they are very, very busy now. These trails provide a safer alternative than cycling on the streets. Whatever can be done to complete the Cotton Belt trail as soon as possible will be a huge benefit to all our cities. I completely support this project! Thank you.

Ellis H. Rice

It's awesome to see the progress with the current work on the Cotton Belt Trail. It's a great continuation and I am hopeful that we can quickly move forward with the complete extension of that trail all the way to Plano. Our current trails have always been busy but our changing work/school environment has gotten more families and commuters in the habit of biking on our trails and they are very, very busy now. They are no longer more of a place just for exercise and local trips. Traffic is increased in commuters, those exploring farther on two wheels, those who are eliminating as many automobile trips as possible, and many other reasons. It appears to me that traffic will continue to increase dramatically. So whatever can be done to complete the Cotton Belt trail as soon as possible will be a huge benefit to all our cities. I fully support this project with no reservations!

Mail**Cotton Belt Trail Design Funding**

Please see attachment for comment submitted via mail.

November 1, 2020

Dear Carli,

What follows are my comments and questions regarding the October topics due to you by

November 10, 2020:

Packet called "Regional Cotton Belt Velocities Trail Design Funding"

Comment - It seems like a wise choice to have two construction contractors to keep costs down and to obtain a contractor with "trail" experience.

Question and Related Comments

Has anyone thought about changing the name of the Cotton Belt Trail to the Silver Line Trail for consistency with the rail line's name? Those of us who have been living in this area for a long time know the history of the corridor being called Cotton Belt and the decision was made to change the name. I think it might be confusing for newcomers to the area to have two different names. Can the CoG recommend that the trails be re-named Silver Line for consistency?

Also, it was thought that the name Cotton Belt Rail Line might be insensitive and

derogatory to African-Americans and that is why the name was changed. If it is insensitive and derogatory for the tram line name, wouldn't it also have negative connotations for the name of the trail? My recommendation is to change the name of the Trail.

I realize the COG is mainly involved in the funding. I'd like to know if the recommendation can be filtered down to the appropriate party.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Phyllis Schwin

RECEIVED

NOV - 4 2020

TRANSPORTATION