



Dallas Area Rapid Transit
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June 5, 2025

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

Subject: Dallas Area Rapid Transit Application to the TxDOT 2025 Transportation Alternatives
Call for Projects for the Cotton Belt / Silver Line Rail Trail Phase 3a

Dear Mr. Heath:

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) is providing this letter in support of its submittal of an application to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) 2025 Transportation Alternatives (TA) Call for Projects requesting funding to construct Phase 3a of the Cotton Belt / Silver Line Rail Trail. The Trail will be a public transportation facility of more than 22 miles parallel to DART's Silver Line Regional Commuter Rail (Silver Line) which is anticipated to begin revenue service in late 2025. This letter provides background and additional support 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 the area and permitting the use of DART railroad right-of-way for hike and bike trails (reference Application Attachment (N)).

Since 2016, DART has coordinated the integration of the Trail with the Silver Line construction plans. To this end, DART initiated engagement and conversations with our diverse residents and community-based organizations (Stakeholders) in order to ensure equity considerations for underserved and transit-dependent populations have access to the Trail and DART Silver Line rail stations. DART has conducted over 150 public/stakeholder meetings discussing how the Trail will be coordinated with the planning, design, and construction of the Silver Line. The Trail was also identified in the 2018 Cotton Belt Regional Rail Corridor Environmental Impact Statement process and received overwhelming public support for its inclusion in the Silver Line construction. On June 30, 2021, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) determined the Trail met the criteria for a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Categorical Exclusion (CE) in accordance with FTA's regulations implementing NEPA. This was reaffirmed on August 12, 2024, when FTA determined that modifications proposed to the Cotton Belt Trail would not result in any substantial impact to the quality of the human environment, and the previously approved NEPA CE determination of June 30, 2021, remains in effect.

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

DART coordinated engineering design for the entire trail corridor concurrently with the Silver Line project, and the trail plans are complete and have been issued for construction. Phase 1 construction of key trail bridges was completed with the Silver Line rail construction. DART is currently coordinating Phase 2 Trail construction through the FTA which includes funding from the 2023 TxDOT TA Call for Projects. A notice to proceed for Phase 2 construction was issued to the contractor in May of this year.

Upon approval of funding by the Texas Transportation Commission for Phase 3a, NCTCOG will program the funding into the Transportation Improvement Program. NCTCOG staff will subsequently coordinate with TxDOT for the transfer of funding from Federal Highway Administration to FTA for DART to access the funds for construction. As such DART will enter into necessary agreements with FTA to construct the Trail Phase 3a segments.

DART supports funding this project as described in the 2025 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. 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 rail 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.

Sincerely,



Dee Leggett

Executive Vice President/Chief Development Officer

c: Christie Gotti, NCTCOG, Senior Program Manager, Transportation Project Programming
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