July 29, 2010

Ms. Bonnie Murphy  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Railroad Administration  
4100 International Plaza, Suite 450  
Fort Worth, TX  76109-4820

Dear Ms. Murphy:

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), the local lead agency, intend to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to study the implementation of rail passenger service on the 26-mile long, DART owned Cotton Belt Corridor from Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport (DFWIA) to the existing DART Red Line. The alignment extends eastward from the Fort Worth Transit Authority’s (The T’s) DFW North Station. Freight service currently operates within a portion of the Cotton Belt Corridor. This service is expected to continue. Because of your agency’s jurisdiction over railroads, we are requesting you to be a cooperating agency.

The project proposes a new regional rail line to provide express rail passenger service within the Cotton Belt Corridor. The primary purpose of the project is to provide passenger rail connections that will improve mobility, accessibility and system linkages to major employment, population and activity centers. The Scoping process for the EIS has been initiated with the publishing of a Notice of Intent in the July 8, 2010 Federal Register.

Potential environmental impacts associated with the project are anticipated to be minimal but may include:

- Potential floodplain and/or wetland impacts;
- Construction related impacts;
- Others as determined in the EIS process.

Your agency’s involvement should entail those areas under its jurisdiction and expertise. The following are activities we will take to maximize interagency cooperation:

- Invite you to coordination meetings;
- Consult with you on relevant impact assessment methodologies and technical studies that will be required for the project;
- Organize joint field reviews with you;
- Provide you with project information, including study results;
• Encourage your agency to use the above documents to express your views on subjects within your jurisdiction or expertise; and,
• Include information in the project environmental documents that cooperating agencies need to discharge their National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) responsibilities and any other requirements regarding jurisdictional approvals, permits, licenses, and/or clearances.

As a cooperating agency, FRA will be afforded the opportunity, together with the public, to be involved in defining the purpose of and need for the project, as well as in determining the range of alternatives to be considered for the project.

You have the right to expect that the EIS will enable you to discharge your jurisdictional responsibilities. Likewise you have the obligation to tell us if, at any point in the process, your needs are not being met. We expect that at the end of the process, the EIS will satisfy your NEPA requirements including those related to environmental consequences and mitigation.

We appreciated your participation in the July 28, 2010 inter-agency scoping meeting. We look forward to your response to this request and your role as a cooperating agency on this project. If, however, you elect not to become a cooperating agency, you must decline this invitation in writing. The declination may be transmitted electronically to jhoppie@dart.org; please include the title of the official responding. In order to give your agency adequate opportunity to weigh the relevance of your participation in this environmental review process, written response to this invitation is not due until after the interagency scoping meeting. Your agency will be treated as cooperating agency unless your written response declining such designation as outlined above is transmitted to this office not later than August 30, 2010.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or our agencies’ respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EIS, please contact Lynn Hayes, FTA Community Planner at 817/978-0565, or John Hoppie, DART Project Manager, at 214/749-2525.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Robert C. Patrick
Regional Administrator

cc: Lynn Hayes, FTA Region VI
    Gary Thomas, DART
    Steve Salin, DART
    Eron Linn, DART
    John Hoppie, DART
    Richard Ruddell, FWTA