



# Appendix H

## DART Cotton Belt Public Involvement Plan

# Cotton Belt Corridor Regional Rail

Public Involvement Plan

FINAL

Dallas, Texas  
March 13, 2017



COTTON BELT



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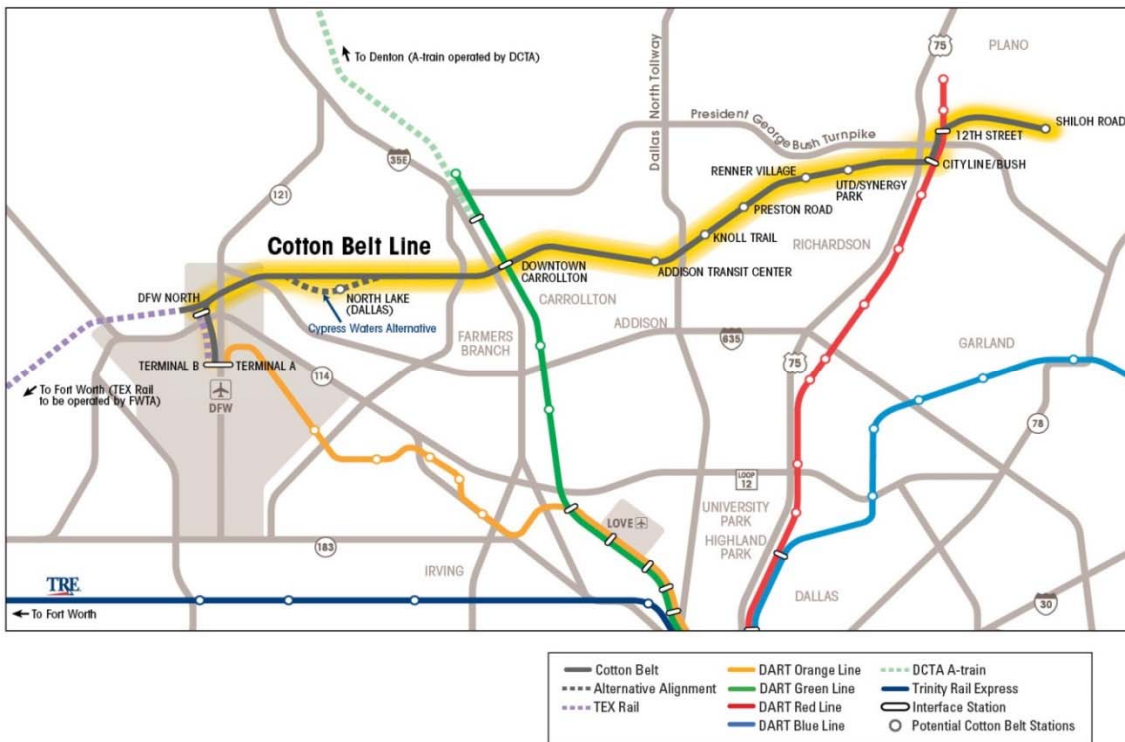
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# 1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), the local lead agency and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the federal lead agency, are preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will evaluate the potential impacts of a proposed 26-mile regional rail alignment between Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport (DFW Airport) and Shiloh Road, just west of Wylie, Texas. This proposed project corridor is part of the larger 52-mile rail alignment between Wylie, Texas and Fort Worth, known as the Cotton Belt Corridor.

The corridor has been included in various DART and North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) planning documents since 1983 as an alignment alternative for regional rail. In 1990, DART purchased 52 miles of the Cotton Belt Corridor stretching from Wylie, Texas to Tower 60 in north Fort Worth for future regional rail service. This corridor includes portions of both DART and the Fort Worth Transportation Authority’s (FWTA) Service Areas. As shown in **Figure 1-1**, the Cotton Belt Corridor traverses Tarrant, Dallas and Collin Counties, and includes the communities of Grapevine, Coppell, Carrollton, Addison, Dallas, Richardson and Plano, as well as portions of DFW Airport. Grapevine and Coppell are not part of the DART Service Area. The FWTA has received a full-funding grant agreement from the federal government to construct the r TEX Rail project, which would utilize the Cotton Belt Corridor west of DFW Airport and provide additional regional connectivity to the Fort Worth CBD. Revenue service for the TEX Rail project is anticipated in late 2018.

Figure 1-1: Project Location Map

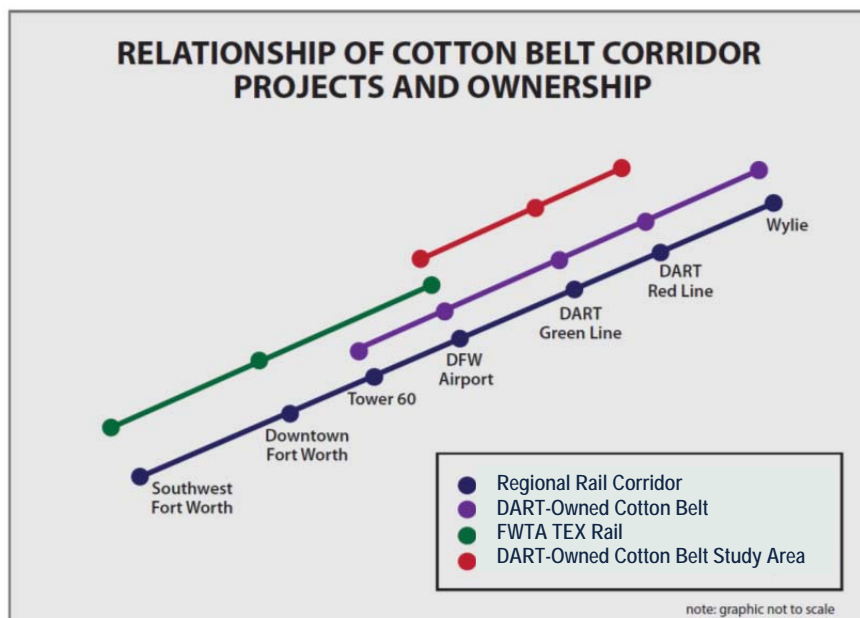


The primary purpose for the Cotton Belt project is to provide regional rail connections that will improve mobility, accessibility and system linkages to major employment, population and activity centers in the northern part of the DART Service Area. The connection of three light rail transit (LRT) lines (Red, Green, Orange) and two planned regional rail lines makes regional connectivity a key component of the Cotton Belt Corridor. It also offers opportunities to connect with the proposed Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) regional rail corridor between Frisco and Irving, with a connection in downtown Carrollton.

DART is leading the technical effort to conduct preliminary engineering (PE) and prepare an EIS for the project from DFW Airport to Shiloh Road. The FWTA is initiating construction on the TEX Rail project. DART and FWTA are coordinating with DFW Airport to integrate their respective projects at that location.

The DART 2030 Transportation System Plan (TSP) identified the Cotton Belt Corridor as a priority project with implementation in the year 2025-2030 timeframe. However, with the advancement of the TEX Rail project, the regional desire to accelerate the segment from DFW Airport to the DART Red Line has increased. In October 2016, The DART Board included the Cotton Belt Corridor in the FY2017 20-Year Financial Plan with an anticipated revenue service date in 2022. **Figure 1-2** identifies the relationship of the Cotton Belt Corridor Projects to their respective agency owners.

Figure 1-2: Relationship of Cotton Belt Corridor Projects and Ownership



To ensure the participation of the affected stakeholders in the study area on the DART portion of the Project, public and agency involvement during the planning of the Project is essential. Early and frequent communication with stakeholders requires the implementation of an effective Public Involvement Plan (PIP). This PIP contains strategies for the effective coordination of public, agency and stakeholder participation. The goal is to provide varying outreach techniques to ensure full and fair participation of all populations

It is the goal of the PIP to build consensus by involving the public in every step of the planning process. This initial PIP may be changed by the lead agencies as additional participating agencies are identified or the complexity of issues becomes clearer. Therefore, this PIP is a living document and can be modified throughout the progression of the EIS process.



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## 2 2.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

### 2.1 Public Involvement Plan Mission and Purpose

The mission of the DART Cotton Belt PIP is to actively engage, inform and involve anyone who chooses to help shape the future of the region's transportation infrastructure through a process that begins early, is convenient and meaningful.

The purpose of the PIP is to proactively and effectively communicate the project scope, issues, and potential impacts and benefits while collecting valuable public, agency and stakeholder input. This input would assist the project team in developing a cost-effective regional rail solution that is supported by the broad range of interests along the corridor. The comprehensive PIP would be coordinated by DART staff with the assistance of the General Planning Consultant (GPC), led by HDR. The PIP would build upon prior activities within the Cotton Belt Corridor from the DART 2030 TSP and the recent corridor development work initiated in December 2016. The PIP identifies roles and responsibilities for each type of activity, and would utilize a diverse assortment of strategies to solicit public input. These include the establishment of various work groups that would provide input at key milestones in the project. Continued collaboration between the project team and interested members of the community would create consensus-building opportunities for the areas affected by and interested in the project.

This PIP would fulfill and expand upon the requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for an EIS and will comply with other requirements for public coordination. The PIP would also comply with the 1994 Executive Order on Environmental Justice by ensuring that populations of concern, including minority and low-income populations, are provided with adequate opportunities to participate and Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 by ensuring that all citizens regardless of race, income, or physical limitations can participate.

### 2.2 Public Involvement Goals and Objectives

DART has established a set of goals for the proposed project. The goals and objectives are in accordance with the underlying transportation needs of the region and are based on the goals adopted to guide the development of the DART 2030 TSP and those stated in the DART Cotton Belt Public Involvement Plan Mission Statement.

In addition to addressing the region's transportation needs, the project goals also reflect the political desire, concerns of the community, and current state of technology. These goals and objectives include:

- Developing and maintaining relationships with community leaders, stakeholders and technical group members to provide an environmentally aware and multi-modal approach to transportation needs.
  - Develop a comprehensive list of stakeholders to obtain input on local issues, impacts and potential improvement strategies
  - Continue to involve affected agencies in the planning process to identify key issues and concerns that may affect the project
- Inform, educate and actively involve the public throughout the planning process by providing timely and easily understood information to members of the affected community and any other interested party.
  - Provide the public with information regarding the project through public workshops, newsletters, fact sheets, electronic mailings, website/on-line content and other techniques
  - Present study findings and alternatives in an understandable, objective and reader-friendly manner
  - Solicit feedback on the level of understanding throughout the public involvement process
  - Regularly monitor public involvement efforts and evaluate for range of citizen representation
  - Present information in a manner that overcomes potential language, economic or cultural barriers and that is meaningful to different cultural groups
- Integrating citizens needs and concerns into the developmental process.
  - Formalize a process to incorporate public and agency input into the technical analyses performed during the study
  - Demonstrate to the community that DART considered the issues and concerns in an equitable manner, even if not adopted
- Working with traditionally underserved populations to understand and consider their needs by implementing processes recommended for environmental justice by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT).
  - Seek out the participation of low-income, minority, physically disabled, youth and elderly populations and monitor their participation so that alternative methods can be implemented to ensure their representation and participation
  - Anticipate and provide for the needs of persons with hearing, sight and mobility disabilities
- Providing for periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure full and open access to all and revision of the process, if necessary
  - Formalize a process to elicit feedback from engaged agencies and public to evaluate outreach success
  - Based on results, update the PIP accordingly

## 2.3 Public Involvement Plan Project Team

The project team is comprised of public administrators, transportation planners, engineers and consultants knowledgeable with coordinating and implementing transit studies. The project team will, at a minimum, meet monthly during the development of the preliminary engineering and environmental documentation. The following is a list of the project team, and each firm's responsibility:

### DART – AGENCY MANAGEMENT

DART would provide oversight for the project. All associated documents and activities would be approved by DART prior to implementation.

- John Hoppie, Cotton Belt Project Manager
- Kay Shelton, GPC Project Manager
- Rosa Rosteet, Community Engagement
- Michael Miles, Government Relations
- Morgan Lyons, External Relations

### HDR ENGINEERING, INC. (GPC) – COTTON BELT PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The GPC, led by HDR and supported by various engineering, planning and environmental firms, would be responsible for providing preliminary engineering and environmental services for the project from DFW Airport to the existing DART Red Line.

- Tom Shelton, Project Manager Cotton Belt
- Kristine Lloyd, Environmental/Planning Lead
- Amanda Stahlnecker, Engineering Lead

### K Strategies Group– PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT COORDINATION

K Strategies Group would develop and implement a carefully crafted program for the participation of all interested parties in the study area. The PIP would serve as a basis for all public and agency involvement activities throughout the project.

- Aimee Vance, Public Involvement Director
- Keith Bilbrey, Public Involvement Coordinator

### Urban Opportunity – STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION

Urban Opportunity is responsible for outreach and coordination with public official stakeholders interested in participating in the project. These can include: state and federal officials, local members of government and other officials.

- Frank Turner, Stakeholder Coordinator

## 2.4 Key Stakeholders

Input from key stakeholders would be sought throughout the duration of the project. Key stakeholders can include DART participating and non-participating cities, counties, local transit agencies, state/regional and federal agencies, as well as members of the general public.

### **CITIES**

- DART cities within the project area: Dallas, Plano, Richardson, Addison, and Carrollton,
- Non-DART cities within the project area: Grapevine and Coppell

### **COUNTIES**

- Dallas
- Collin
- Tarrant

### **TRANSIT AGENCIES**

- DART
- FWTA

### **RAILROADS**

- Fort Worth and Western Railroad (FWWR)
- Dallas, Garland and Northeastern Railroad (DGNO)
- Kansas City Southern (KCS)

### **AVIATION AGENCIES**

- DFW Airport
- Addison Airport

### **STATE/REGIONAL AGENCIES**

- Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)
- North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG)/ Regional Transportation Council (RTC)
- North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA)

### **RESOURCE AGENCIES**

- Various state, regional and federal agencies with jurisdiction over the project area

### **FEDERAL AGENCIES**

- Federal Transit Administration (FTA), NEPA Lead Agency
- Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), NEPA Cooperating Agency
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), NEPA Cooperating Agency

**PUBLIC STAKEHOLDERS**

- Residents and businesses within the project area
- Homeowners Associations (HOA)
- Business Associations
- Community Groups
- Public Officials
- Neighborhood Associations
- Schools/Universities
- Developers
- Property Owners

**INSTITUTIONS**

- The University of Texas at Dallas

## 2.5 Potential Project Concerns

DART is committed to working with key stakeholders, agencies and the public to identify potential areas of concern. Many issues can be identified in advance, based on community and stakeholder input. As early as 2006, as part of the adoption of the 2030 TSP, DART hosted public meetings to discuss the Cotton Belt Corridor. During these meetings, members of the public raised some community concerns. These concerns have been brought forward and used to help define the current project's scope of work. In August 2016, public meetings were held along the corridor to again discuss the Cotton Belt and to identify community interest and concerns. The following is a brief overview of some potential project concerns that have been identified during scoping:

**KEY ISSUES**

- Western terminus and interface with the Fort Worth Transportation Authority (FWTA) TEX Rail Corridor at DFW Airport
- Potential alignment deviation near North Lake near the Cypress Waters development
- Downtown Carrollton Green Line /BNSF / Cotton Belt interface
- The Red Line interface and
- Eastern terminus at Shiloh Road

**COMMUNITY CONCERNS**

- Noise and Vibration
- Traffic and Safety
- Visual
- Air Quality

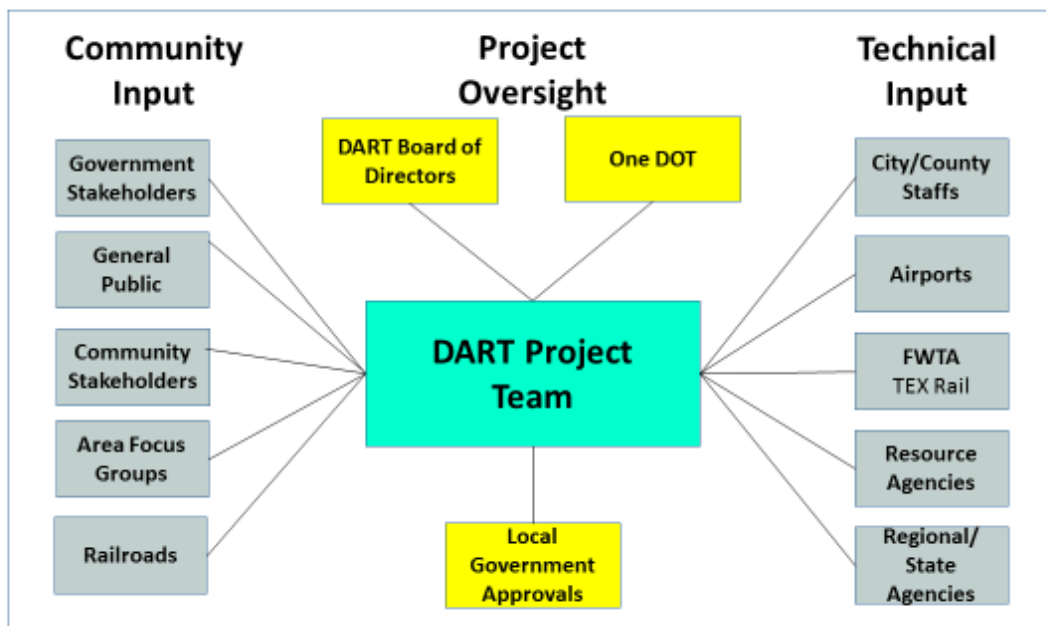
- Natural Resources
- Vegetation
- Water Resources
- Property Values

## 2.6 Public Involvement Framework

The public involvement activities outlined in the following pages are preliminary and the PIP would be updated as necessary by working with DART and the affected communities. Any changes to the outlined activities would be noted, and the PIP would be revised accordingly. All changes to the proposed PIP shall be approved by DART prior to implementation.

The comprehensive PIP would serve as the basis for all public involvement activities throughout the duration of the project. It would identify roles and responsibilities for each activity, as well as outline an implementation strategy. **Figure 2-1** illustrates the overall framework for the PIP, highlighting community and technical input plus project oversight. Each of these is discussed in more detail below. This framework illustrates the relationship between the DART Project Team, stakeholders and various entities with jurisdiction over the project area. A proposed public involvement schedule is shown in Appendix A.

**Figure 2-1: Public Involvement Plan Framework**



## 2.7 Project Oversight

The DART Board of Directors will provide Local project oversight for the Cotton Belt project. Federal oversight will be through the agencies of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). Local governments will also be responsible for project approval that fall under their jurisdictions.

### 2.7.1 DART Board of Directors and DART Project Team

The DART Cotton Belt project team would regularly brief the DART Board of Directors on the EIS process and keep them informed of issue affecting the project. The DART Board of Directors approved a resolution directing DART Staff to advance the Cotton Belt Corridor as part of the FY2017 20-Year Financial Plan. The DART project team would lead all efforts associated with the community and technical input including public meetings and focus groups.

### 2.7.2 ONE DOT

ONE DOT is a collaboration of U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) agencies to provide oversight and resolve common issues. Three DOT agencies, FTA, FAA and FRA have interest in the Cotton Belt Project. In December 2016, FTA hosted a ONE DOT Meeting to determine roles and responsibilities for the project. It was determined that FTA would be lead agency for the project with FAA and FRA serving as cooperating agencies. This ONE DOT group will meet regularly to monitor the project and provide guidance.

### 2.7.3 Local Government Approvals

Local governments including cities, counties and the DFW Airport Board will be responsible for granting approvals that fall under their jurisdictions. These approvals are varied and will include such items as zoning changes, certificates of occupancy, street modification approvals, and instituting quiet zones. The DFW Airport Board will need to approve the use of airport property for transit uses.

## 2.8 Community Input

Community Input will be obtained through a variety of methods including public meetings/hearing, city council meetings, individual meetings with various stakeholders and property owners, coordination with city managers and geographically define focus groups. Outreach to these groups is outlined in Section 210 Public Involvement strategies. The following discusses efforts to seek community input.

### 2.8.1 Government Stakeholders

Government stakeholders include state and county officials, local members of government well as the Regional Transportation Council (RTC). DART initiated coordination with city governments along the corridor with a meeting with city managers along the corridor. DART provided current status and near term look ahead for the project including schedule

and public meeting plans. The project team will have a continuous outreach effort to public official stakeholders interested in participating in the project.

The RTC is the independent transportation policy body of the regional Metropolitan Planning Organization. The RTC oversees the metropolitan transportation planning process and its members include local elected officials. DART is a member of the RTC which meets monthly. In March 2016, the RTC adopted a policy position that DART explore possibilities of expediting rail service in the Cotton Belt Corridor in a timeframe that more closely matches the implementation of rail service in the western side of the region (TEX Rail).

## 2.8.2 General Public

The general public is the largest interest group for the Cotton Belt project. The general public includes residents of the corridor, businesses, property owners, transit riders and citizen of DART cities. Members of the general public may also provide community input as stakeholders or participate in area focus groups. In August of 2016, DART held 6 public meetings to relaunch the project and solicit community input. Three rounds of public meetings are being scheduled for the project. Public hearings will also be scheduled to receive comment on the Draft EIS.

## 2.8.3 Community Stakeholders

Community stakeholders include special interest groups along the corridor such as major employers, developers, neighborhood associations and other community organizations. This group will aid in identifying key issues along the corridor that may influence and improve the design of the project. Some community stakeholders have been previously identified and DART will meet with these groups at the onset of the project. Others will be coordinated with as the projects advances and issues are identified.

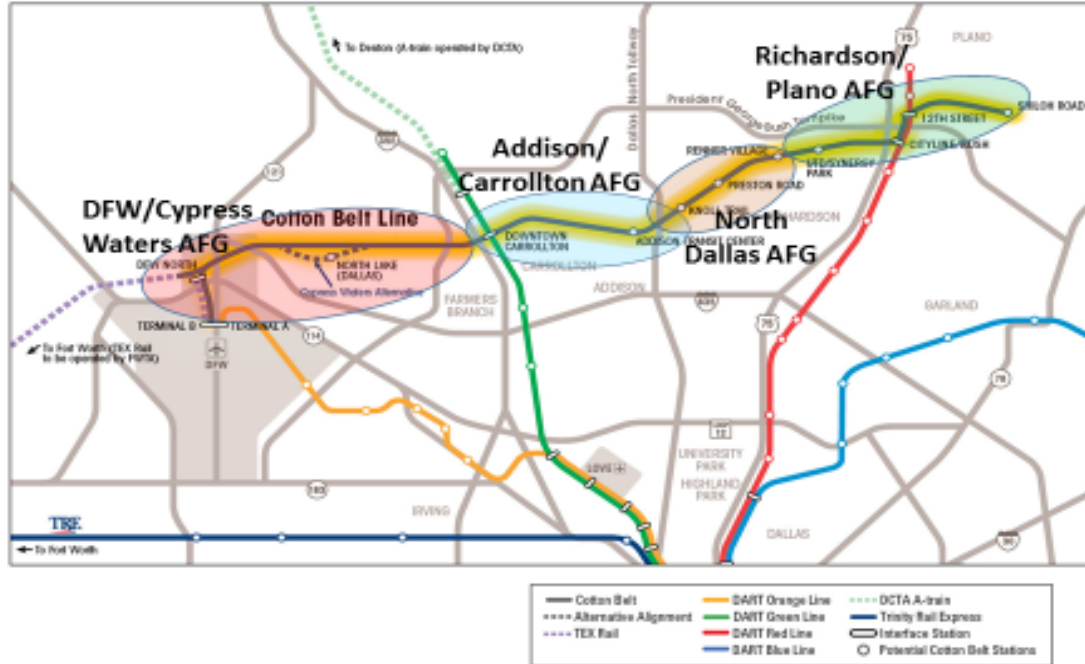
## 2.8.4 Area Focus Groups

As a part of the development and implementation of the PIP, Area Focus Groups (AFG) will be established to provide input and assist with resolving issues and developing support for the project. These area focus groups, which consist of residents and community leaders, would review the recommendations relative to the environmental analysis and preliminary design of the project. The role of the AFG is to provide input, exchange ideas, identify and assist with resolving issues and concerns and disseminate information to their respective neighborhoods or groups.

To better address specific issues of the affected community, the project team will establish four AFGs. **Figure 2-2** reflects the AFG breakdown within the corridor. The AFG meetings will be scheduled to convene with key project milestones. The current schedule has identified four AFG meetings for each AFG; however, the program is flexible enough to add additional meeting as the needs arise.



Figure 2-2: Area Focus Group Locations



## 2.8.5 Railroads

Three freight railroad companies operate within the corridor through agreements on tracks that are owned by DART. These freight service providers are: The Fort Worth and Western Railroad (FWWR), the Dallas, Garland and Northeastern Railroad (DGNO) and the Kansas City Southern (KCS). These railroads will be consulted throughout the project. Although much of the input received from the railroads is technical in nature, railroads are private entities and coordination is categorized as community input. Much of the coordination with the railroads will be through DART's Railroad Management Department. In its oversight capacity, FRA will also look after the interests of the railroads.

## 2.9 Technical Input

Technical input will be obtained from a variety of sources including cities, counties, airports, transit agencies and resource agencies. The goal is to implement a transit line is well coordinated with existing and planned infrastructure while minimizing impacts to the community. Each of the sources of technical input was consulted in 2010 when the project was originally initiated and each will be invited to participate again. The following discusses the coordination effort with technical community.

### 2.9.1 City and County Staffs

Coordination with cities and counties along the Cotton Belt route is key to a successful project. The project team will have a continuous outreach effort with the staffs of these jurisdictions. This will ensure that the Cotton Belt project complements existing and

planned public and private projects and that all the requirements of governing authorities are met. Cities and counties will also participate in the design review process of the project.

## 2.9.2 Airports

Like cities, DFW International Airport has authority over infrastructure and development on airport property. DART will meet with airport staff monthly to ensure that the Cotton Belt project complements existing and planned projects and that all the requirements of airport are met. This coordination will replicate the successful coordination effort DART used in the implementation of the Orange LRT Line. The Cotton Belt project will pass directly adjacent Addison Airport. Coordination with Addison Airport will be through the coordination with the City of Addison. Airports will also participate in the design review process of the project. In its oversight capacity, FAA will also look after the interests of the two airports.

## 2.9.3 FWTA (TEX Rail)

At DFW Airport, the Cotton Belt Project will interface with FWTA's TEX Rail project. As such early and ongoing coordination is required. Much of this coordination effort will be in conjunction with the DFW Airport coordination effort described above.

## 2.9.4 Resource Agency Coordination

Resource agencies and Native American tribal organization have been invited to participate in the planning process for the corridor. The Draft and Final EIS will also be distributed to the agencies for comment. This coordinated effort will continue after the Record of Decision when completing necessary permits.

## 2.9.5 State/Regional Agencies

A key element of this PIP is coordination with state and regional agencies that have some interest in the project. These include the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) and NCTCOG. The Cotton Belt rail line will cross with grade separations several roadways owned or maintained by TxDOT or NTTA. Coordination with staff from each of these agencies is critical for achieving an appropriate design of these crossings. The NCTCOG is assists local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development. As such, they are advocate of the Cotton Belt project and working for the benefit of communities along the corridor. Ongoing coordination with NCTCOG will foster support for the project.

## 2.10 Public Involvement Strategies

Different strategies would be developed and employed in an effort to achieve a high level of public and stakeholder involvement along the corridor. These techniques would not only

communicate information about the project but would also focus on garnering public support. The following is a list of key strategies to be used during this study:

- Utilize groups to assist with notification outreach tactics to their groups
- Meet with key stakeholders regularly to maintain participation levels and ensure understanding of key issues
- Enhance outreach to traditionally underserved populations, such as minority groups and the mobility impaired
- Utilize resources to generate comprehensive residential and business listings that can enhance public and stakeholder participation
- Utilize technology, such as public internet forums, e-mail and social media, to disseminate information updates

### 2.10.1 Scoping Meetings

DART held two scoping meetings 2010. One scoping meeting was held for the general public at the Addison Conference Center and one interagency scoping meeting was held at DART headquarters. The intent of the scoping meetings was to solicit early input from the public and agencies regarding purpose and need for the project, alternatives to be studied and environmental effects to be analyzed. A Scoping Summary Report was prepared that documents the process and input from the public and agencies. This input provides the framework for the environmental review process. FTA has determined that this Scoping held in 2010 is still valid.

### 2.10.2 Public Meetings

In August 2016, DART relaunched the public process for the Cotton Belt Project with a series of six (6) public meeting held along the Cotton Belt Corridor. With this relaunch, the project team would host up to three (3) sets of public meetings in order to present information to the general public, as well as receive input from the affected community. Public meetings would be tailored to meet community needs and would occur in accordance with project milestones. DART would be responsible for the logistics, equipment, and notifications of these meetings. The project team would assist DART by preparing meeting presentation materials, presenting technical information, and documenting the meeting minutes.

### 2.10.3 Public Hearings

Public Hearings would be held after the Draft EIS is completed, signed and circulated for public review and comment. A Notice of Availability would announce the release of the Draft EIS to the public and be published in the local newspaper(s). The notice would indicate the dates and times for the public hearings, where and when the Draft EIS and other project documents may be examined and a description of the project and its impacts. One public hearing would be scheduled at two locations along the corridor. The notice would also be published in the *Federal Register* and placed on DART's website,

[www.dart.org/cottonbelt](http://www.dart.org/cottonbelt). Publication of the notice would initiate a 45-day public comment period and invite oral or written comments from all interested parties. Public hearings would be held 15 days (or more) after the Notice of Availability has been published. A Final EIS would be prepared and published and will include responses to comments received on the Draft EIS and commitments to mitigate impacts.

#### 2.10.4 Miscellaneous Meetings

The project team would schedule and attend twenty meetings, anticipated to address a variety of issues during the course of the study. DART will be responsible for the logistics, equipment, and notifications of these meetings, while the project team may assist, as needed. The project team would also provide support for any additional meetings with city, county or agency staff, as required.

#### 2.10.5 Environmental Justice Outreach

Public involvement activities would comply with Executive Order (EO) 12898 and amending EO 12948 requiring each federal agency to make achieving environmental justice part of its mission “by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.” The project team has identified a range of public involvement techniques and venues to reach these traditionally underserved populations. These techniques include, but are not limited to the use of interpreters, outreach in minority publications and other media outlets, mailers, inserts and neighborhood group meetings.

The project team would seek out minority, low-income, and limited English-speaking populations within the project area for outreach opportunities. These organizations include, but are not limited to: ethnic chambers of commerce, community groups and low-income assistance programs. Information resources will be made available to these groups including in person presentations, information for newsletters and websites, and other public information marketing collateral, as requested.

#### 2.10.6 Newsletters

A well-designed, informative newsletter is an important tool for sharing project updates with the community. The project team would design a series of printed newsletters throughout the duration of the project and timing would be tied to project milestones. The purpose of the newsletters would be to communicate project updates and progress, while also highlighting past public involvement activities, as well as, dates and times of upcoming events. The newsletters will include project news, featured stories, graphics, and surveys to communicate project information and receive stakeholder input. DART would be responsible for the printing and distribution of the newsletters.

### 2.10.7 Factsheets

**Well-designed, informative factsheets are important tools for fostering a greater understanding of the project and its components.** The project team would design a series of printed factsheets throughout the duration of the project. Each single page factsheet would focus on a specific project component and would serve to concisely facilitate understanding of the project through bullet points, charts or graphics. DART would be responsible for the printing and distribution of the newsletters.

### 2.10.8 Media Communications

Due to the importance of disseminating consistent, accurate, and timely information, all two-way media contact, including questions/answers, press conferences, tours/briefings, requests for interviews and/or additional information would be coordinated by DART Media Relations, with the project team assisting as needed. No member of the consultant team is permitted to discuss the project with any media representatives unless DART has authorized such contact in writing and is in attendance at the media interaction. At a minimum, news releases may be sent at the following points in the process:

- Draft EIS release
- Announcement of public meetings and hearings
- Final EIS release

The project team would assist DART, as needed, with preparation and distribution of media communications.

### 2.10.9 Website Management

The project team would assist DART in developing supplemental project information and updates to be posted on DART's website ([www.dart.org/cottonbelt](http://www.dart.org/cottonbelt)). The website would provide easy access to project information, meeting presentation materials, newsletters, reports and other materials. A link to the project information would be provided on the DART homepage. The project team would assist DART with the development of online project surveys and questionnaires to gain public input. Individuals would be directed to the DART website throughout the duration of the project for updates and input opportunities.

### 2.10.10 Visualization

Visualization products would be developed to illustrate regional rail design concepts. An animated virtual tour of the corridor would use photo simulations to identify proposed station sites. This tool would allow the public to see the proposed modifications to the corridor, including train dimensions to understand visual impacts, hear examples of sound impacts and traffic impacts.

### 2.10.11 Public Comment Database

Public comments received during the scoping period and the initial public meetings have been compiled by the project team for DART. New comments can be received via web

submission, e-mail, mail, comment card or orally during public meetings/hearings. A stakeholder comment database would also be regularly updated and managed by the project team. The project team would communicate updates with stakeholders as the project progresses. The public comments database would be included with the weekly public comment report.

### 2.10.12 Mailing List

A mailing list developed by the project team will include federal and state agencies, local officials, regional transportation planning entities, citizen groups, community groups, civic and professional organizations, affected property owners, and people who live and work in the project corridor and who express interest. Throughout the project planning process, the mailing list would be updated with additions gathered through the public involvement activities.

## 2.11 Evaluation and Monitoring

Evaluation and monitoring activities would be conducted at key points during the Cotton Belt Corridor Regional Rail Project. This evaluation and monitoring process will assist in maintaining project support as the planning process nears completion. These activities will serve the following purposes:

- To measure the awareness of and satisfaction with the Cotton Belt Project activities
- To ensure that comments received during the Cotton Belt Project are being addressed and incorporated into the decision-making process
- To be sure that eventual recommendations have a realistic expectation of being adopted by the DART Board

### 2.11.1 Evaluation and Monitoring Activities

There are several techniques that will be employed to evaluate the effectiveness of the PIP:

- Comment Cards – At the public meetings, comment cards will be provided in order to obtain public views of the project. In addition to project specific questions, these would also ask how a person found out about an event, which aspects were most or least effective, including location, format and materials and whether they would participate in a similar activity again. The comment card would include an option for that person to be added to the corridor mailing list if they are not already included.
- E-mail – The e-mail address of the DART Community Affairs Representative would be distributed and the account regularly monitored for messages. The e-mail address would be published on all public involvement communication materials and a link would be provided on the DART website. E-mailed comments and

suggestions would be recorded and included in the comment/response feedback process.

- Comment/Response - Following each public meeting, a summary of comments received would be prepared. Responses and/or the method by which each comment would be addressed in subsequent study activities would be included. Such comment summary matrices would be referenced during key decision-making milestones to ensure that issues are incorporated and that appropriate modifications can be made to the PIP.

## 2.11.2 Results and Lessons Learned

Implementing a comprehensive PIP is a learning experience and can vary depending on the level of controversy and the range of competing interests. The PIP should be thoroughly documented and monitored throughout the planning process, so that the lessons learned can be passed on for consideration during subsequent projects and studies undertaken by DART and other transportation agencies.

### 3 MAJOR MILESTONES AND WORK PLAN

This section is a preliminary work plan detailing the outreach activities for each milestone during the EIS. The plan identifies different tools, activities and strategies for soliciting public input and garnering support. The work plan would serve as the roadmap for implementation of the PIP. Detailed work plans will be developed for components that require coordination between the project team and DART.

#### 3.1 Work Plan and Major Milestones

The public involvement activities and outreach will be structured around eight major project milestones. These milestones reflect important decision making points in the planning process. The eight major milestones for the Cotton Belt Corridor Regional Rail Project are below.

- Milestone 1:** Scoping – Project Implementation  
(July 2010 – August 2010)
- Milestone 2:** Conceptual Engineering Draft Design (5%)  
(August 2010 – November 2010)
- Milestone 3:** Conceptual Engineering Final Design (5%)

In 2014, DART advanced a 5% Design for the Cotton Belt Regional Rail Project and produced an Alternatives and Environmental Considerations Report (AECR). The AECR identifies existing environmental conditions and potential impacts along the length of the Cotton Belt Corridor

- Milestone 4:** Preliminary Engineering Draft Design (10%)  
(May 2017 – October 2017)
- Milestone 5:** Draft EIS Preparation and Distribution  
(February 2017 – January 2018)
- Milestone 6:** Preliminary Engineering Final Design (10%)  
(October 2017 – December 2017)
- Milestone 7:** Final EIS Preparation and Distribution  
(December 2017 – March 2018)
- Milestone 8:** Anticipated Record of Decision  
(March 2018)



The following sections summarize the objectives of each project milestone and list a range of proposed activities that can be implemented to achieve the goals and objectives of the PIP, while working towards transportation improvement. For each milestone, the project team will seek out minority, low-income, and limited English-speaking populations within the project area for outreach opportunities using interpreters, outreach in minority publications and other media outlets, mailers, inserts and neighborhood group meetings.

### 3.2 Milestone 1: Scoping – Project Implementation/ Milestone 2: Conceptual Engineering Draft Design (5%)/3.4 Milestone 3: Conceptual Engineering Final Design (5%)

Milestones 1, 2, 3 and three have been previously completed and no further action is required.

### 3.3 Milestone 4: Preliminary Engineering Draft Design (10%)

During this milestone period, the goal of the public involvement activities will be to inform the general public, interest groups, and involved agencies about the preliminary engineering draft design 10%.

#### Public Involvement Activities – Milestone 4

- Conduct Public Meeting presenting the preliminary engineering draft designs for the proposed alternatives
- Conduct Area Focus Group Meetings
- Assessment of neighborhood issues and concerns
- Meet or correspond with project stakeholders including affected local, regional, state and federal agencies regarding issues within their jurisdiction or concern
- Meet with members of the community to discuss specific issues as needed
- Provide notice of ongoing and upcoming public involvement opportunities
- Update Cotton Belt Corridor Regional Rail Project portion of DART website
- Publish a project newsletter that will include project progress summary to date and outline upcoming and on-going public involvement activities
- DART Board briefings

### 3.4 Milestone 5: Draft EIS

The main goal of the public involvement activities during this milestone period is to obtain comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The document will describe the

environmental findings such as air quality, cultural resources, visual quality, socio-economics, noise and vibration, land use, economic development and others.

#### Public Involvement Activities – Milestone 5

- Conduct Meetings with Area Focus Group Members
- Meet with members of the community to discuss specific issues as needed
- Meet or correspond with project stakeholders including affected local, regional, state and federal agencies regarding issues within their jurisdiction or concern
- Conduct a formal public hearing to describe the results of the Draft EIS and obtain input on issues
- Initiate 45-Day public comment period
- Update Cotton Belt Corridor Regional Rail Project portion of DART website to include information on Cotton Belt project public involvement activities, published newsletters, public meetings and decisions
- Provide notice of ongoing and upcoming public involvement opportunities
- DART Board briefings

### 3.5 Milestone 6: Preliminary Engineering Final Design (10%)

During this milestone period, the goal of the public involvement activities will be to inform the general public, interest groups, and involved agencies the preliminary engineering final design.

#### Public Involvement Activities – Milestone 6

- Conduct Area Focus Group Meetings
- Publish a project newsletter that will include project progress summary to date and outline upcoming and on-going public involvement activities
- Assessment of neighborhood issues and concerns
- Meet or correspond with project stakeholders including affected local, regional, state and federal agencies regarding issues within their jurisdiction or concern
- Meet with members of the community to discuss specific issues as needed
- Provide notice of ongoing and upcoming public involvement opportunities
- Update Cotton Belt Corridor Regional Rail Project portion of DART website

### 3.6 Milestone 7: Final EIS

The main goal of the public involvement activities during this milestone period is to obtain comments on the Final EIS. The Final EIS will respond to comments received during the

circulation of the Draft EIS, and will identify mitigation measures and develop a mitigation monitoring program for the duration of the project.

#### Public Involvement Activities – Milestone 7

- Conduct Meetings with Area Focus Groups
- Continue meetings with the project stakeholders to discuss issues within their jurisdiction or concern
- Conduct public meeting to release Final EIS and initiate the 30-day public comment period
- Update Cotton Belt Corridor Regional Rail Project portion of DART website
- DART Board briefings

### 3.7 Milestone 8: Record of Decision

Once a preferred alternative is selected as a result of the EIS process, it is anticipated that the FTA will proceed with a Record of Decision (ROD) after which funding negotiations could proceed. The main goal of the public involvement activities during this milestone phase of the project is to keep the public informed of Cotton Belt Project updates and decisions.

#### Public Involvement Activities – Milestone 8

- Continue meetings with the project stakeholders to discuss issues within their jurisdiction or concern
- Publish newsletter that will include project progress summary to date
- Update Cotton Belt Corridor Regional Rail Project portion of DART website
- DART Board briefings

## 4 ACRONYMS

Area Focus Group (AFG)  
Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF)  
Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)  
DART 2030 Transit System Plan (TSP)  
Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW Airport)  
Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA)  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS)  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)  
Executive Order (EO)  
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)  
Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)  
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)  
Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS)  
Fort Worth Transportation Authority (FWTA)  
General Planning Consultant (GPC)  
Innovative Finance Initiative (iFi)  
Light Rail Transit (LRT)  
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)  
North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG)  
North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA)  
Preliminary Engineering (PE)  
Public Involvement Plan (PIP)  
Regional Transportation Council (RTC)  
Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)  
Southwest-to-Northeast Rail Corridor (SW2NE)  
Technical Work Group (TWG)  
Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)  
Trinity Railway Express (TRE)  
United States Department of Transportation (USDOT)

## 5 CONTACT INFORMATION

The public involvement plan contacts are:

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