



Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) Cotton Belt Regional Rail “Silver Line” Project Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why build the Cotton Belt Regional Rail?

A: Public transportation generates externalities such as the beneficial impact of congestion mitigation, improved air quality and economic development. The project’s primary purpose is to provide passenger rail connections that will improve mobility, accessibility and system linkages to major employment, population and activity centers in the northern portion of the DART service area and support sustainable growth, local and regional land use visions, economic development and tourism.

Goals for the project include:

- Enhance corridor mobility and accessibility:
 - Provide connectivity to existing and planned passenger rail facilities.
 - Provide transportation investments serving future population and employment growth.
 - Improve access to existing and emerging major activity centers, including connectivity to DFW Airport.
 - Increase transit usage for existing and new riders.
 - Improve access to transit.
 - Provide cost-effective options.
- Reduce Vehicle Miles of Travel:
 - Increase transit capacity and improve travel times through more reliable transit.
 - Reduce air quality impacts.
- Promote economic development and sustainable land use patterns:
 - Enhance employment opportunities.
 - Encourage economic development opportunities.
 - Promote sustainable and livable development opportunities.
 - Promote consistency with regional and local transportation and comprehensive plans.
 - Coordinate initiatives for land use development and redevelopment.
- Provide an environmentally-sensitive transit investment:
 - Minimize negative impacts to the community.
 - Minimize negative impacts to the environment.
 - Minimize negative impacts to natural, social and economic environments.

Q: What is the forecasted ridership of the DART Silver line?

A: Ridership is forecasted at 5,630 daily boardings at the beginning of revenue service, including the first day of ridership. The calculation is 5,630 daily boardings x 365 days/year. This annualizes to 2.054 million.

Q: How is the Cotton Belt Regional Rail (CBRR) being paid for?

A: Capital financing for the Cotton Belt project is backed mostly by sales tax receipts from the 13-city service area, rather than operating revenues. The Cotton Belt Corridor Regional Rail Project has a capital budget of \$1.243 billion. As part of the financing plan for this project, we have arranged for a \$908 million loan from the U.S. Department of Transportation. Passenger revenue is projected at \$3.5 million annually.

Q: Who will be responsible for maintaining the areas around the rail line?

A: DART will maintain the DART right-of-way. DART anticipates the maintenance of the trail will be performed by the respective cities.

Q: What are the current deadlines for questions and responses?

A: The deadlines are as follows for questions submitted to DART regarding the Cotton Belt “Silver Line”:

- August 2 for response to questions prior to July 4
- August 16 for response to questions through July 23
- 30-day deadline for response to questions after July 23
- All noise-related questions received from March through August 23 will be included in a separate response to be released on September 23



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Q: What is the maximum speed the DART Silver Line will operate at in North Dallas?

A: Maximum operating train speed in North Dallas will be 45 mph.

Q: Why will the DART Silver Line use diesel trains?

A: The selected vehicle is discussed in Section 2.3.2 of the FEIS/ROD. Vehicles operating in the Cotton Belt Corridor must be compliant with FRA requirements since the passenger rail will share much of the corridor with freight operations. As such, overhead catenary cannot be used as they are incompatible with freight clearances. Air Quality is discussed in Section 4.13 of the FEIS/ROD. The diesel engines will be compliant with EPA Tier 4 ultra-low emission standards.

Q: What else is there to know about the DART Silver Line trains?

A: The vehicle manufacturer, Stadler Inc., proposes to equip the vehicles with closed-cell, noise absorbing polyethylene foam in the bogie areas of the vehicle. DART will work with Stadler to complete the review of this material as a viable option to implement on the underbody. The material would be limited to the bogie (truck) areas, since there are no other noise sources below the vehicle. This material has been in use on Stadler vehicles for the “S-Bahn Stuttgart” (Stuttgart’s commuter rail system) for 5 years with no reported issues.

Q: What has DART incorporated from the City of Dallas resolution?

A: The City of Dallas resolution was considered in the project approved by the DART Board in August 2018. DART Board Resolution No. 180084 outlined a program for additional potential betterments to address the City of Dallas resolution in addition to mitigation measures. The following provisions were incorporated in the project:

- Cypress Waters Station and Knoll Trail Station in the City of Dallas
- Grade-separated street crossings at Hillcrest Road and Coit Road
- 15-foot sound wall (12-foot sound wall plus additional 3 feet for screening)
- 12-foot or 15-foot betterment wall based on input from residential adjacent property owners
- Vibration mitigation in residential areas to address the 65vdB standard
- Landscaping to reduce visual impacts
- Quiet zones based on FRA approval of application from City
- Vehicle noise level restriction at maximum headways
- Crossing bell mitigation
- Cooperation in the implementation of the hike and bike trail as funds become available
- Freight abandonment between Waterview Parkway and Knoll Trail Drive in Dallas

Q: Will freight operate on the DART Silver Line?

A: Freight abandonment occurred through a federal action by the Surface Transportation Board on or about January 2010. Pursuant to federal regulation 49 CFR 1152, Subpart F-Exempt Abandonments. Abandonment or discontinuance of trackage rights occurred in over 5.34 miles of the Cotton Belt, extending between Waterview Parkway and Knoll Trail Drive. There are no plans for freight activity or service in this area. The process for re-initiating freight activity in this area would include 1) DART Board resolution; 2) City of Dallas resolution, and 3) action by Surface Transportation Board. The process includes an Environmental Impact Statement, public hearing and a finding relative to the economic benefit of re-establishing service. The City of Dallas is working on steps required for an ILA.

If you have questions about the DART Silver Line, please send them to Cottonbelt@DART.org, call 972-833-2856 or visit www.DART.org/cottonbelt.