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DART re-examines how to bring Arlington and other non-member cities into the fold



By Tom Benning / Reporter

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Dallas Area Rapid Transit is considering joint negotiations with the Fort Worth Transportation Authority and the city of Arlington to [provide a commuter bus line between the city's downtown and the Trinity Railway Express](#).

But as DART looks to help fill one of the biggest public transportation gaps in North Texas, the agency's board also wants to take a closer look at precisely how it brings non-member cities like Arlington into the fold.

DART's board will vote Tuesday on allowing the agency to contract with non-member cities on not just rail and express bus service, but also regular bus service and paratransit. The proposal would also limit the length of these contracts and require such cities to eventually pursue a long-term service plan.

Case in point: DART's negotiation objectives in contracting commuter bus service with Arlington include a "desire to work toward a long term agreement with Arlington that would ultimately lead to Arlington's permanent commitment to providing public transit."

Traditionally, the requirement for receiving DART service has been pretty simple: a city wanting to join has its residents vote on adding a one-penny sales tax to fund public transportation. And 13 cities, ranging from Dallas to Glenn Heights, have approved that since DART began in 1983.

There's been some tweaks over the years. But things got more complicated in 2011, when DART's board departed from that long-standing practice and amended its policies to allow non-member cities to contract with the agency for express bus service or co

That paved the way for Mesquite to start last year a three-year trial run of DART-contract bus se periods are finished and raised concerns about whether long-paying member cities were getting

As DART's board discussed in recent weeks the Arlington proposal — which would cost \$700,0 station — some board members expressed frustration about the lack of clearly defined process.

Board member Mark Enoch said Monday that he supports DART looking for ways to expand, bu understands growing transit needs in Arlington and elsewhere, he said the issue ultimately boils

"Why would someone want to pay a penny, as the 13 members have, if someone else could come in and pick and choose what they want and not have to pay the penny?" said Enoch, who represents Garland, Rowlett and Glenn Heights

The proposal before DART's board would expand the agency's ability to contract with non-member cities on regular bus service and paratransit. But it would also limit those contracts to seven years and require the cities involved to come up with a long-term plan within three years.

That would mean those cities would have to eventually hold a vote on joining the DART service area and potentially taking on a one-cent sales tax. If that didn't pass — or some other dedicated revenue source wasn't identified — the service would then be terminated.

Additional proposals, with slightly different details, are expected to be discussed Tuesday.

Enoch, for instance, said he plans to offer a measure that would require contracting cities to make a more immediate commitment, likely after two years, to call for an election on whether they would like to join DART as a full member.

But rather than focusing on just a one-cent sales tax vote, Enoch said he would like to offer a option in which residents could vote to take sales tax revenue currently used for parks and other economic development and shift it toward DART.

We'll update the post when we get more information, but in the meantime, check out DART's briefing on the item after the jump.

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Alex 3 hours ago

The Dorothy Spur! I don't understand why that old rail corridor that runs along the eastern side of 360 hasn't been brought to the front burner! It could give you a rail line that runs between Centreport Station and Six Flags and beyond. Getting over 30 and 360 would be the only expensive part of that construction, the rest up North of that is mostly a piece of cake.

Reply 0



Omar Jimenez 4 hours ago

I would however push as well for some kind of Express Service to Six Flags, The Ballpark, and the Cowboys Stadium during the games. From there, you will actually see ridership go up. With Frisco, you also have Stonebriar, IKEA, and the Roughriders as well. From there, you can see the possibilities.

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Gilliansage 2 hours ago

Frisco and Allen did not want to give up there 2Cents in tax revenue to Dart, that's why there is no mass transit. If the cities would just quit being so stingy, than they'd already have a rail. That info was from a friend who used to work for Dart.

Reply [1 reply](#) +2



Omar Jimenez 1 hour ago

The really interesting thing that in Frisco and Allen, they have very nice retail, entertainment, and restaurants. I think there is debate if they joined DART, if non of that would of happend if the 2 Cents went to DART.

Reply 0



Nancy Swartz 4 hours ago

As a resident of Arlington I want to see mass transit in our development plans.

Reply 0



Jeff Schneider 5 hours ago

There is an awfully big assumption in this article that the city of arlington WANTS to be involved in Dart. Which history has shown they have absolutely zero interest in this prospect for many good and many poor reasons.

Reply +1

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