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## Tourist-oriented DART shuttle poised to include expanded Oak Cliff access



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A tourist-oriented shuttle linking downtown Dallas to the Bishop Arts District and other landmarks will include expanded access to north Oak Cliff, according to preliminary action taken Tuesday by Dallas Area Rapid Transit's committee-of-the-whole.

That's even though DART board members didn't resolve the \$266,000 annual shortfall created by the lengthened route or staff concerns that the buses slated for the service couldn't safely make one of the turns in the new loop.

Proponents said those details could be sorted out before DART's board takes final action on May 28. And Oak Cliff boosters – on DART's board and in the audience – cheered the revised route as a way to boost neighborhood job growth.

"It will make a huge difference in a community that really needs it," said Bob Stimson, president of the Oak Cliff Chamber of Commerce.

The bus service is one of two shuttles scheduled to debut this August, making it easier to travel between downtown Dallas, hotels along I-35E, Oak Cliff and the Cedars entertainment district.

The two-year pilot program's \$1.3 million annual cost is being shared by DART, the city of Dallas, Downtown Dallas Inc. and a federal grant. Buses would run every 15 minutes during most service hours, and plans have called for shuttle riders to pay DART's normal fares.

The [new Oak Cliff route was initially slated](#) to enter the neighborhood on the Jefferson Boulevard Viaduct, veer onto Colorado Boulevard, pass through the Bishop Arts District and then make a brief run on Jefferson Boulevard.

But neighborhood leaders said that alignment would ignore business and residents farther west. So they proposed an alternative that would enter Bishop Arts the same way, but feature a loop bounded by Davis Street, Edgefield Avenue, Jefferson Boulevard and Zang Boulevard.

DART staff said the loop wasn't feasible because of extra costs and the fact that larger buses couldn't safely make the lefthand turn from Davis Street onto Edgefield Avenue. And some DART board members said they wanted more information on how the longer route would impact ridership.

But other board members said the safety issue could be solved by trying shorter buses or taking a slightly different route. And they expressed hope that the extra \$266,000 annual cost might be shared by the project's other stakeholders.

"It's absolutely correct that this is going to cost us more money," said DART board chairman John Danish. "But there comes a time when you really believe in things, you invest a little more money."

DART's committee-of-the-whole also gave preliminary approval Tuesday to a contract with Arlington to run a commuter bus line between the city's downtown and the Trinity Railway Express' CentrePort station.

That action came despite loud objections from some board members that the proposed contract gave too much power to Arlington and too little protection to DART's interests. A more robust discussion is expected at the next DART board meeting on May 28.

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