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## Transportation

# DART, Dallas near decision on second downtown track's route

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Dallas Area Rapid Transit and city officials are close to deciding where to put a second downtown Dallas light-rail track. And DART this week threw a 10th potential alignment into the mix for consideration.

The agency and city for years have wanted a second track through the downtown hub of the nation's longest light-rail system.

All four DART train lines currently run on the same track through downtown, limiting the frequency of trains across the entire network. And whenever there's a problem downtown like a car wreck, shooting, electrical outage or nearby fire, there are delays for passengers all over the system.

DART plans to seek federal funds for construction. Agency officials said they will have a better chance if both the agency's board and the Dallas City Council sign off on the same proposed route.

"They want to see the whole community is behind the same alignment," said Dallas transportation committee chair Lee Kleinman.

# New proposal for second downtown DART track

Dallas Area Rapid Transit officials are looking at 10 potential routes for a new downtown Dallas light-rail track after revealing a new one on Monday. They say it is needed to improve flexibility when problems arise since all four current lines run along one track downtown. Here's a look at estimated costs and ridership for each alternative.



## Existing proposals

**Alternative B4**



Length: 2.41 miles  
 Percentage Tunneler: 21 percent  
 Construction Cost: \$511 million  
 Annual Operating Cost: \$2.5 million  
 Projected Annual Trips: 40,462

**Alternative B4 Without Harwood Station**



Length: 2.41 miles  
 Percentage Tunneler: 21 percent  
 Construction Cost: \$493 million  
 Annual Operating Cost: \$2.2 million  
 Projected Annual Trips: 31,068

**New proposal: Alternative B4-Avoidance**



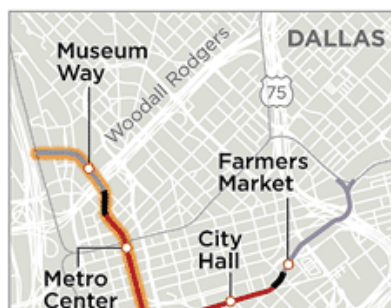
Length: About 2.41 miles  
 Percentage Tunneler: About 21 percent  
 Construction Costs: About \$511 million  
 Annual Operations: About \$2.5 million  
 Projected Ridership: Undertermined

**Alternative B4a**

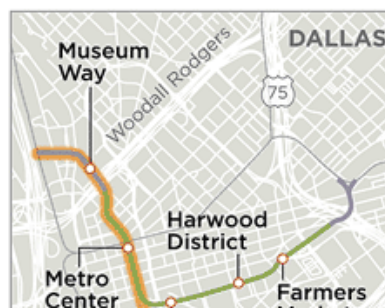


Length: 2.48 miles  
 Percentage Tunneler: 41 percent  
 Construction Cost: \$830 million  
 Annual Operating Cost: \$4.3 million  
 Projected Annual Trips: 37,363

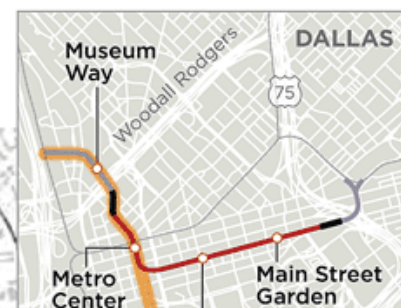
**Alternative B4b**



**Alternative B4e**



**Alternative B7**





Length: 2.64 miles  
 Percentage Tunnled: 44 percent  
 Construction Cost: \$898 million  
 Annual Operating Cost: \$4.4 million  
 Projected Annual Trips: 33,244



Length: 2.67 miles  
 Percentage Tunnled: 0 percent (Elevated Track)  
 Construction Cost: \$505 million  
 Annual Operating Cost: \$2.5 million  
 Projected Annual Trips: 40,522



Length: 2.27 miles  
 Percentage Tunnled: 49 percent  
 Construction Cost: \$912 million  
 Annual Operating Cost: \$3.4 million  
 Projected Annual Trips: 31,578

**Alternative B7a**



Length: 3.29 miles  
 Percentage Tunnled: 65 percent  
 Construction Cost: \$1.2 billion  
 Annual Operating Cost: \$3.9 million  
 Projected Annual Trips: 38,062

**Alternative C3**



Length: 2.24 miles  
 Percentage Tunnled: 34 percent  
 Construction Cost: \$596 million  
 Annual Operating Cost: \$8 million  
 Projected Annual Trips: 30,894

**Alternative C3a**



Length: 2.26 miles  
 Percentage Tunnled: 54 percent  
 Construction Cost: \$1.1 billion  
 Annual Operating Cost: \$10.2 million  
 Projected Annual Trips: 31,917

\*Dallas Area Rapid Transit doesn't anticipate having enough money to build an entire new track at once. It plans to build in two phases. The first phase will likely go to or near the convention center.

SOURCE: DART

Brandon Formby/Staff Writer; Kyle Alcott/DMN

DART officials presented the options to the council's transportation committee this week and included a new alternative. It is based on an existing proposed route that runs underground from Victory Station, rises to street level near Field and Young streets, heads east along Young and then connects to existing track in Deep Ellum.

The new proposed alignment follows the same path until it gets near City Hall, then heads two blocks north and runs along Jackson before connecting into the Deep Ellum tracks. That shift on the route's eastern portion is meant to avoid a church parking lot and new townhomes near the Farmers Market.

“Based on comments we’ve received, the homeowners association and the church are appreciative of the fact we’ve come up with an avoidance alternative,” said Steve Salin, DART’s rail planning vice president.

Both those routes would cost about \$511 million to build. The original route is expected to provide 40,462 trips a day. The agency hasn’t yet estimated potential ridership of the “avoidance” version, but Salin said it will be in the 40,000 ballpark.

All 10 routes run to or near the Convention Center station, which is expected to be a connection for a Dallas-Houston bullet train station planned on the southern edge of downtown.

The cheapest light-rail route would cost about \$493 million. The most expensive would be more than \$1.1 billion. Some routes run along Marilla Street, others farther north along Commerce.

Kleinman and Dallas transportation committee member Sandy Greyson said they like the proposals that run along Young Street. They hope that spurs more economic development along downtown’s southern end, near several government and office buildings.

“I’ve always thought it should go farther south to try and develop that area,” Greyson said.

The transportation committee on Aug. 24 will recommend preferred alternatives for full council approval. The DART board is expected to make a final decision next month.

“I’m excited,” Kleinman said.

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47 Comments

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**Awesome Joey**

8 days ago

I favor B4. Cheapest, straightest, and serves the places people want to go.

Like the old route.

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0 0



**Ken Duble**

9 days ago

Some years back, DART had reduced it's alternatives to four. Then, a couple of years ago, these morphed to 8. By early this year, we had 9. Now we have 10. Aren't we moving in the wrong direction here?

Here are a few observations:

1) With the exception of C3 and C3a, these cost figures are completely untrustworthy and should be rejected by any rational person. Why? Because, for the first time ever, we're seeing something superimposed on 8 of these 10 plans labeled Phase 1. Based both on DART's previous descriptions and the diagrams we see in front of us, this is clearly a tunnel. Even no-tunnel option B4e now has a tunnel, but there are no cost figures. How do we know the costs of C3 and C3a won't become more competitive once the cost of this tunnel is included? That's just the problem: We have no numbers.

2) In the same way I consider the cost figures untrustworthy, I consider the ridership figures particularly untrustworthy for versions of B4 and C3. We don't know a) the impact high-speed rail service would have on the system, nor do we know the growth patterns for this southern part of the city. By contrast, I have more confidence in ridership estimates for the B7 alternatives, as this area is largely built-out.

2) The fact DART had provided an updated option for B4 but not for C3 implies the variations of B4 and B7

are the only ones DART is considering seriously. And yet, the C3 options are the only versions whose costs are credible, as they don't include an added tunnel.

3) Without tallying the various options, the real choice is whether to be cost-conscious, and think small due to funding realities, or else, to think big. I don't see any real possibility the city is going to allow DART to condemn brand new townhomes built with city permits while this very process was underway. And I don't believe downtown activists would permit an elevated line. So, with that in mind, If we opt for the cautious approach, our options are B4 Avoidance, or B7. Should we take the ambitious approach, and view D2 as an opportunity for downtown, our options would be B7a, and some modified version of C3a drawn to save the townhomes.

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