

**PEER REVIEW GROUP'S CONCLUSIONS
ON ALIGNMENT ALTERNATIVES FOR
DART "D2" 2ND DOWNTOWN LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT LINE**

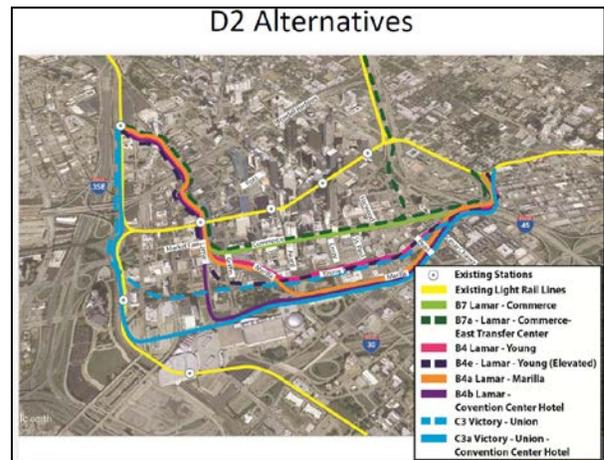
August 18, 2015

1.1 BACKGROUND

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) has advanced substantially toward its initial vision adopted by 58 percent of voters in 14 cities, plus Dallas County on August 13, 1983. On August 18, 2014, the most recent segment of the Orange Line opened to the new DFW Airport Station. With this opening, DFW Airport becomes the third-largest American airport with a direct rail connection to the city center, giving the world's third-busiest airport direct-rail access for more than 61 million passengers annually. Only months later, DART held a groundbreaking for DART's 3-mile Blue Line extension from Ledbetter Station to a new University of North Texas (UNT) Dallas Station on the UNT-Dallas campus. The Blue Line extension also includes a new station at Camp Wisdom Road. (DART.org/about/history.asp)

These rail lines to and from the downtown Dallas area extend to cities north, south, east, and west, advancing the DART system from simply a public transportation mode to a ubiquitous mobility choice. At issue is ensuring that DART has the capacity to continue increasing its ridership and reduce its station headways. To satisfy these demands, DART must construct a second rail line connector through Downtown Dallas to accommodate the longer and additional trainsets required.

The Peer Review Team, made up of 6 architectural or planning professionals, 3 others from the public sector and another from academia, examined the outcomes and responses from DART's extensive alternative alignment studies and public meetings made available by DART principals. The peer reviewers met on four occasions to examine past discussions, evaluate recent conclusions, and offer feedback and recommendations on those



outcomes. In the opinion of most of the reviewers, DART’s ultimate decision will set the direction for the emerging alignment for decades to come.

The proposed Alignments for the DART D2 next phase of the 2030 Plan (see D2 *Alternatives Summary Appendix A.*) were developed by the DART Planning Department, led by Mr. Steve Salin, Vice President of Capital Planning Growth & Regional Development, along with Transit Project Manager III, John Hoppi. With considerable public input, DART has suggested the various routes and station locations, indicated potential alignment alternatives (shown on the referenced Alternatives document *Appendix B*), as well as options for the final design and construction of D2. (*Appendix C.*)

The study area is bounded by the existing LRT line through the northern side of downtown, IH-35E (Victory Station), US-75/IH-345 (Deep Ellum Station), and IH-30.

This group originated when a GDPC member firm offered DART the input of a Peer Review Group - representing the GDPC membership, and DART accepted. This document is the summary of that review and dialog with resulting conclusions.

1.2 RATIONALE

It is important to the Greater Dallas Planning Council (GDPC) to maintain the role as a collaborative “thought leader” regarding public policy impacting the quality of life for current and future residents, as well as for visitors to North Central Texas.

1.3 CHARTER

To apply the collective expertise of GDPC members to develop a commentary on the DART D2 alignment determination, designed with the:

- Objective of increasing core capacity and an
- Outcome of increased ridership desired throughout the system



1.4 METHODOLOGY

The group gained insight into the various alignment and station possibilities as produced by the DART Planning Group. This information, along with questions and discussion regarding priorities as they relate to the goal of the meetings, shaped the dialog. Initially, the group engaged in adopting what they believed to be the most important points, then committed to a list of priorities, and identified desired outcomes. This activity designated major headings to examine, which in turn, produced points to discuss, making decisions on the validity of each point as it related to the two

objectives. What ensued for the duration of the meetings was a robust discussion covering numerous questions, posits, decisions, agreement, and discourse. But the take-away was that the exercise covered an abundance of information and potential remedies, leaving the group feeling that the time spent was worth the effort and of value to DART and Dallas City Leadership.

1.5 PRIMARY CRITERIA

The criteria described in A-E below were utilized to 1) explore possible alternatives/outcomes and 2) investigate, through dialog and exchange, other factors which produce results that may have stronger appeal to both riders and area stakeholders while satisfying the objectives of our Charter.

A. MAXIMIZE CONNECTIVITY

- Consideration of existing and forecasted future mobility systems. While some saw this as an important imperative to consider as it relates to the High Speed Rail (HSR), DART’s Capital Investment Grant (CIG) application needs assurance that the selected Local Preferred Alternative (LPA) is based on empirical decisions in pursuit of enhancing current system ridership. While the group expressed that accommodating the greatest number of riders is the goal because revenues drive the train, they also confirmed support of HSR when it is farther along in development.
- For DART – there’s nothing in their charter that enables them to direct how adjacent property owners choose to relate. Only the City’s zoning and development codes can do that. A best outcome for them (and the proposed HSR enterprise) would be that enough area stakeholders embrace the value of the system. The result would be an energized district that contributes to O&M and further investments. Their key role is ensuring the right-of-way can connect and relate.
- The need to interconnect HSR and DART is obvious. However, caution is needed to arrive at valid assumptions about its impact, relationship to the CBD, and how best to provide the trip to the passenger’s final destination. The proposed HSR train will arrive during peak hours every 30 minutes. The capacity of each train is 400 passengers. Probably fewer than ½ will be going to a destination that is within walking distance of a DART station. And of that number, many of the business travelers (who can expense the cost) will elect to take a cab or ridesharing service. Most likely passengers going to Houston will probably drive or rideshare to the station, some will cab. Many will ride DART. In many ways HSR may perform like Love Field, but with a higher percentage of business based trips. There is no question that multi-modal service, including DART LRT, is needed; however, peer reviewers determined that it’s too early to judge its development impact or service needs.

- Part of the reluctance of DART to spend precious capital for additional line and station consideration for connections to HSR is lack of financial capacity.

B. WISE USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS

- Create a single system efficiently in one phase
- Recognize conflicts between other criteria and DART’s capacity for funding
- Grant application needs to include the LPA based on empirical decisions in pursuit of enhancing current system ridership
- Some commented that the priority is to have an effective transit system that is done correctly, rather than just done efficiently

C. ADDRESS LIKELY PROJECTED FUTURE NEEDS

- Demographic shifts (multigenerational)
- Core vs. suburb shifting relationships
- Jobs vs. origin/destination emphasis
- Maximize flexibility over useful life
- Connections with future mobility option

D. COORDINATE WITH OTHER CIVIC DEVELOPMENTS

- Coordinate with existing urban civic infrastructure
- Accommodate transitions to “Complete Streets” and visions developed during DD360 updates
- Accessibility (wheeled vehicles and pedestrian routes)
- Be mindful of other developments/impacts and subsequent CityMap outcomes

E. FUTURE SYSTEM CONSIDERATIONS

- Consideration for how synergies can develop from working with multiple agencies/groups
- Strive for developing ambiance in the stations/boarding areas
- Plan for seamless experience beyond points of departure to points of destination, including before and after entering the DART system, creating a sense of place at each terminus
- Activate the Edges – transparent, interconnected stations that are less a transit stop and more a “piazza” to promote community, increase ridership, and improve the visibility and comfort of riding DART

1.6 CONCLUSIONS

- A. **B4 Alignment (Appendix B) or B4 Alternative with Avoidance Option (Appendix C)** comes closest to meeting the criteria of the majority of this group, although not everyone was in concert with this opinion. In addition, some worry that modifying current station locations - decreasing from two to one station - may reduce potential ridership, which DART staff are continuing to evaluate and will announce findings
- B. Alignment should be visible or at grade as much as possible
- C. Utilize appropriate architectural components as conduits to express public art
- D. Multimodal and Intermodal are both key (connectivity/future needs)
- E. Seamless accessibility must be maintained throughout the entire system
- F. Also discussed was the low current ridership from the Convention Center. The group felt there are much stronger potential catchment areas further east of City Hall.

APPENDIX A.1

July 2015 City Briefings – Alternatives Summary, page 1 of 2

 <h1>Alternatives Summary</h1>			
July 2015 City Briefings			
	Summary	Pros	Cons
 <p>B4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.41 miles Cost \$511 M 21% tunnel 40,500 trips + \$2.5 M O&M/yr 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highest ridership Low capital cost Full D2 alignment within budget Low O&M Better visibility on Young Street New market areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocate First Presbyterian garage Opposition from First Presbyterian Church Concerns regarding proximity to residential
 <p>B4 w/o Harwood</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.41 miles Cost \$493 M 21% tunnel 31,100 trips + \$2.2 M O&M/yr 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low capital cost Low O&M cost Full D2 alignment within budget Better visibility on Young Street New market areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low ridership Relocate First Presbyterian garage Opposition from First Presbyterian Church Concerns regarding proximity to residential
 <p>B4a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.48 miles Cost \$830 M 41% tunnel 37,600 trips + \$4.3 M O&M/yr 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate-High ridership New market areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High cost Some residential acquisition Opposition from Farmers Market neighborhood
 <p>B4b</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.64 miles Cost \$898 M 44% tunnel 33,200 trips + \$4.4 M O&M/yr 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional access to Convention Center area New market areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low ridership High cost Some residential acquisition Opposition from Farmers Market neighborhood
 <p>B4e</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.67 miles Cost \$505 M Elevated 40,500 trips + \$2.5 M O&M/yr 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High ridership Lower cost Full D2 alignment within budget Low O&M Avoids relocation of First Presbyterian parking garage New market areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual issues with structure Opposition from First Presbyterian Church Concerns regarding proximity to residential Lack of public support (negative visual impact)



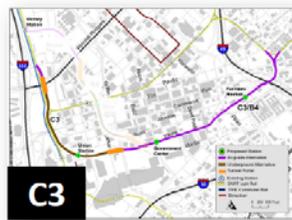
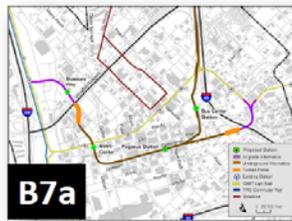
APPENDIX A.2

July 2015 City Briefings – Alternatives Summary, page 2 of 2



Alternatives Summary

July 2015 City Briefings



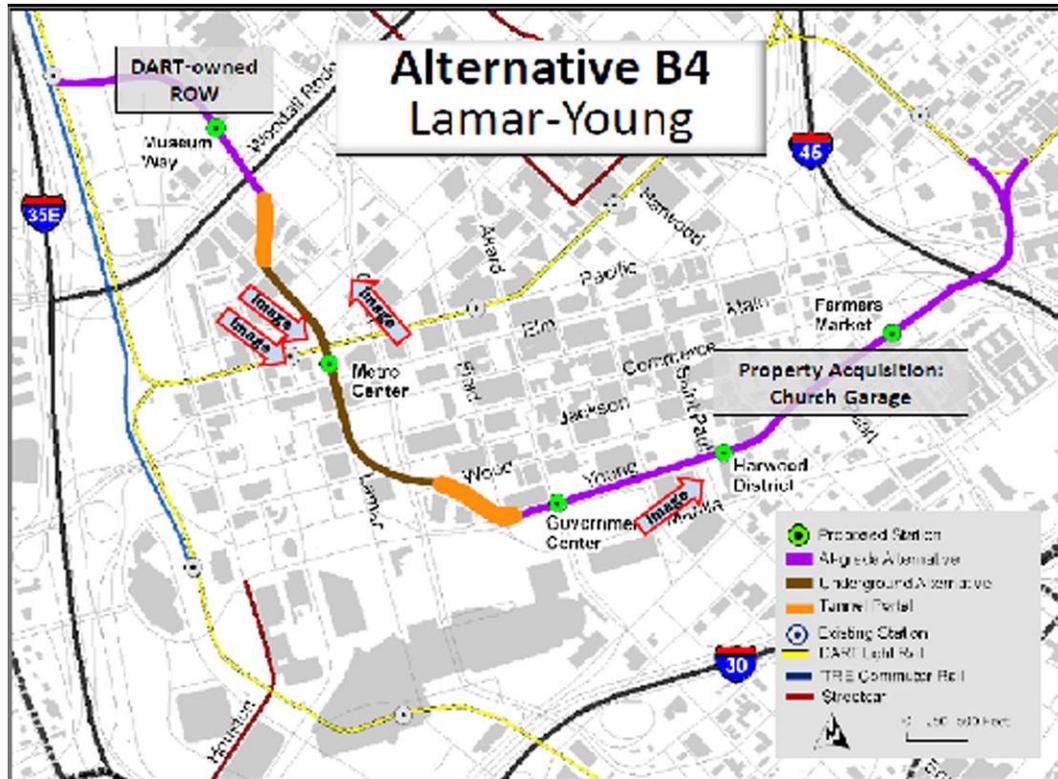
Summary	Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.27 miles • Cost \$912 M • 49% tunnel • 31,600 trips • + \$3.4 M O&M/yr 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low O&M cost • Serves office core • Enhanced transfer opportunity with existing Bryan/Pacific LRT mall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost • Low ridership • Proximity to existing Bryan/Pacific LRT mall may duplicate service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.29 miles • Cost \$1,173 M • 65% tunnel • 38,100 trips • + \$3.9 M O&M/yr 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves office core • Increases use of East Transfer Center • More direct connection to North Central corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most expensive • Most tunnel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.24 miles • Cost \$596 M • 34% tunnel • 30,900 trips • + \$8.0 M O&M/yr 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizes existing LRT tracks north of Woodall Rodgers • Lower cost • Better visibility on Young Street • Full D2 alignment within budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low ridership • Poor geology • Relocation of West Bus Transfer Center • High O&M cost • Woodall Rodgers modifications • Relocate First Presbyterian garage • Opposition from First Presbyterian Church
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.26 miles • Cost \$1,057 M • 54% tunnel • 31,900 trips • + \$10.2 M O&M/yr 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizes existing LRT tracks north of Woodall Rodgers • Serves Union Station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low ridership • Most expensive • Significant tunnel • Poor geology • Relocation of West Bus Transfer Center • Increased O&M • Some residential acquisition • Opposition from Farmers Market neighborhood

NOTES:



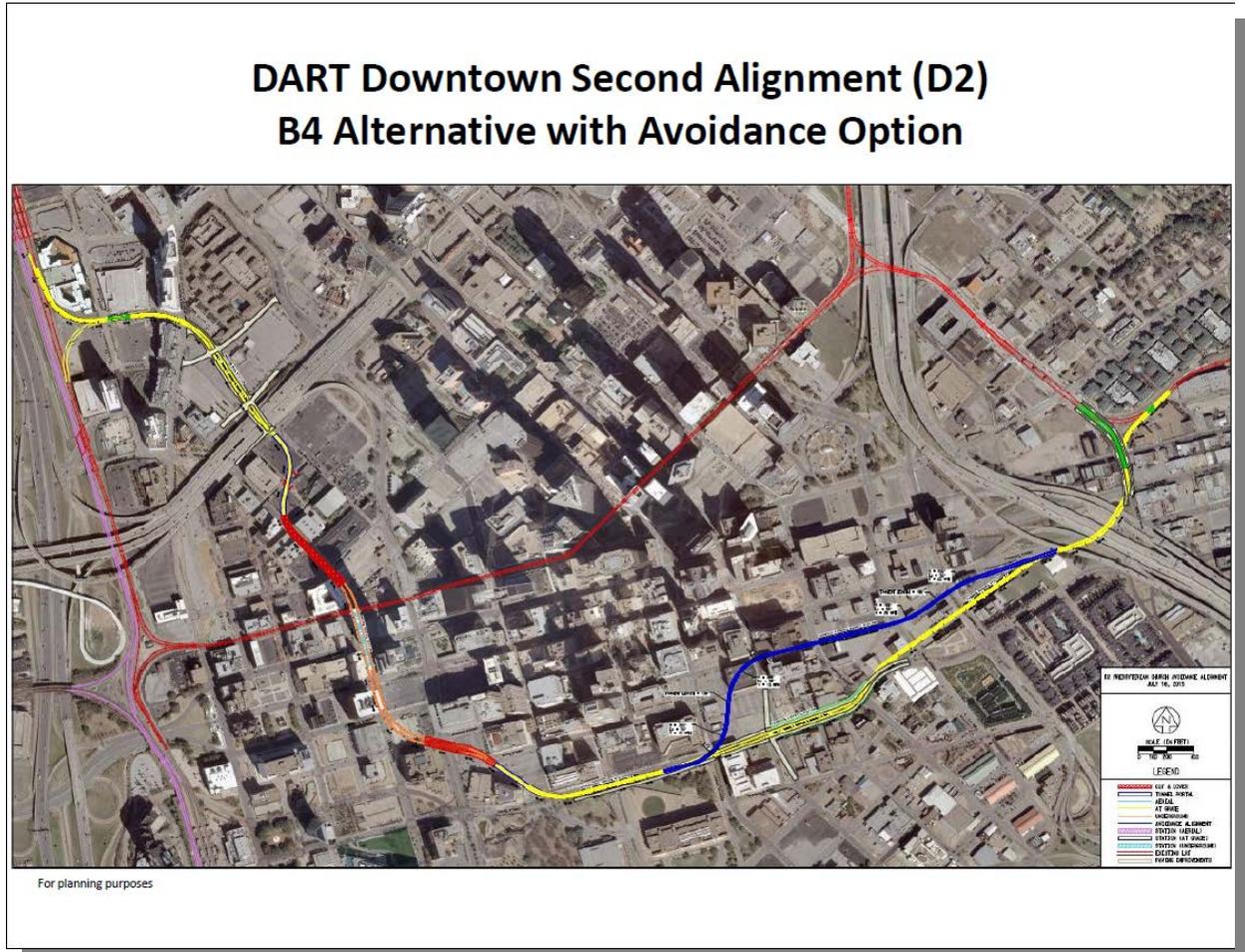
APPENDIX B.

Alternative B4 Overview - showing constraints



APPENDIX C.

B4 Alternative with Avoidance Option - slide provided to peer reviewers.



APPENDIX D.

DART D2 Preliminary Draft Evaluation Results chart

	B4	B4wo	B4a	B4b	B4e	B7	B7a	C3 ¹	C3a ¹
Project Length (miles)	2.41	2.41	2.48	2.64	2.67	2.27	3.29	2.24	2.26
% Tunnel (miles)	21%	21%	41%	44%	Elevated	49%	65%	34%	54%
Capital Costs (2013,\$M)	\$511	\$493	\$830	\$898	\$505	\$912	\$1,173	\$596	\$1,057
O&M Cost Increase over No-Build (2013,\$M)	\$2.5	\$2.2	\$4.3	\$4.4	\$2.5	\$3.4	\$3.9	\$8.0	\$10.2
Project Trips	40,462	31,068	37,636	33,244	40,522	31,578	38,062	30,894	31,917
Added Riders	5,122	-4,454	1,761	-3,528	6,201	-3,945	-4,685	-8,886	-1,932 ²
FTA Core Capacity Criteria (Interim Guidance)	Med-High	Med	Med-High	Med	Med-High	Med	Med	Med	Med

1 Assumes West End Bus Transfer Facility is relocated to Union Station.
2 Added riders drops to -5437 if bus transfer facility is not relocated to Union Station.

1 

APPENDIX E.

Peer Review Team Makeup

GDPC D2 PEER REVIEW TEAM		
	SECTOR	PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINE
1.	Private	Architectural & Engineering Strategy
2.	Private	Architecture
3.	Public	Planning
4.	Private	Architecture
5.	Private	Architecture & Planning
6.	Public	Planning
7.	Academia	Architecture
8.	Private	Planning & Urban Design
9.	Public	Director-Outreach Programs
10.	Private	Business Process Improvement

APPENDIX F.1

Peer Review Discussion boards – 1 of 2 (Exhibits prepared for Peer Reviewer discussion)



- **IF** elevated, D2 should push the envelop of “infrastructure design”
- Visually appealing stations and line extensions
- Become an addition to the beauty of the city, not an eyesore
- Integrate with other alternative transit options; bike trails, car-sharing, and popular pedestrian routes
- Build sustainable communities by integrating transit into existing neighborhoods
- Develop creative partnerships to assist in the funding of design features

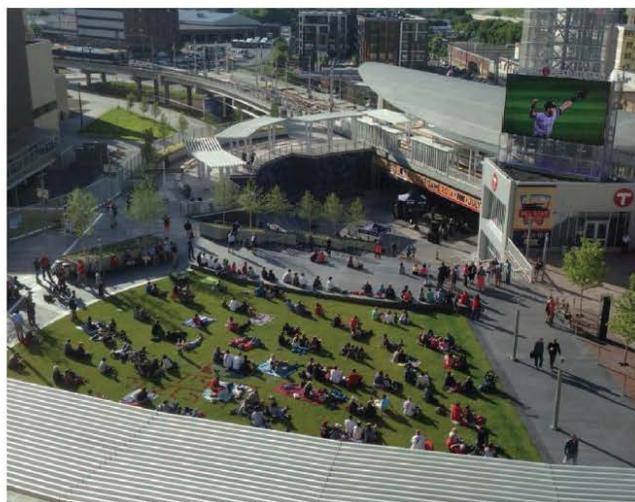


APPENDIX F.2

Peer Review Discussion boards – 2 of 2



- Develop station identity that is more of a community gatherer than a transit stop
- Create a Place with the use of physical elements that are welcoming and comfortable
- Effective relationship between surrounding retail and activity
- Be the conduit of a strong sense of community
- Find partners, public and private, to complete the goal of a complete street by a layering of activities
- Stations should be adaptable and dynamic



APPENDIX G.

Substantive peer reviewer and board member comments made during the process*

*Names of reviewers and commenters omitted per consensus of the GDPC board. Messages are in chronological order with most recent first.

August 17

Thanks (Task Force rep). I know we all appreciate your insights and input. I'm hopeful any shift north and subsequent move of the station be one that keeps a Farmers Market area station that's also accessible to Deep Ellum near IH 345. Your no-vote is noted. 'Hope we see you on Thursday.

August 17

I think that the 'Avoidance Alternative' raises a number of issues that could negatively impact development potential of bisected properties as well as connectivity in the southern portion of downtown. Given that the Jackson Corridor would have very limited access since the majority of it would be consumed by rail and a portion of Wood is also potentially being closed for park development, there is a potential that if both of projects happen there would be very limited east-west connectivity between Commerce and Young/Canton. This is contrary to supporting a tight, urban grid and could have further development and walkability implications for this portion of downtown. My vote is no.

August 13

Peer Review Group Colleagues:

I am not elated over the current discussion(s) but neither am I surprised. In my opinion consider this an example of an active democracy.

August 11

I agree our position isn't clear as to which type of B4 alignment we conclude is our version of LPA. We generally say it should be visible (even 'day-lighted' as in their proposed Ross Ave. station alternative) or at-grade as much as possible. While not unanimous - elevated is generally discouraged. In all cases - the urban-design-as-art is of key importance.

That DART continues looking into earlier realignment over to Jackson in response to resident concerns in the Farmers Market area shows an appropriate sensitivity. But they still need to determine whether consolidating two stations into one can be as effective. (DART staff) assured us they're still examining that - and he will have an update soon.

I remain an advocate for keeping both stations if they move the FM station westward to between Harwood and Pearl - by moving the Farmers Market station over closer to IH345 so it can serve the core of Deep Ellum as well as more FM area riders. Such as it is - until more info is available from DART - I feel this gets us as close to a conclusion as we can be. Seven responses to the affirmative <snipped> - do I have your direction to forward this Conclusion to the Board for its vote?

August 11

I vote in support moving this ahead to the Board. However I'm wondering if the committee had a recommendation on which B4 alignment to support and should it be included at this level of engagement? I believe there is consensus among DART and the Downtown community for B4 but we should be weighing in on which B4 alternative. The DDI Transportation Committee is supporting B4 Lamar – Young.

August 7

Just for the record:

Something I had pointed out during our conversations in the group is that when people are referring to “an elevated system”, I don’t believe that what we are meaning is a totally elevated system. Only short spans in lieu of tunnels would be elevated. The assumption that when those of us who are in favor of (at this point two) elevated spans – are in fact defining the entire system is a misnomer.

August 3

(Task Force reviewer) your points are certainly well taken, and we did discuss concern about HSR several times. At the end – we concluded that DART’s Capacity Building Grant application needs to select the LPA based on empirical decisions in pursuit of enhancing current system ridership – rather than hopeful, or yet-to-be fully vetted visions by others.

We also talked a lot about the very low current ridership from the Conv. Center and felt there are much stronger potential catchment areas further east of City Hall.

All of us are very passionate that it accommodate as many riders as possible – and we all really want HSR to be successful. But, one on our panel quantified it in terms of the potential daily trips that would actually deboard HSR and continue on DART. (Considered a very small number of daily potential given HSR proposed capacities and headways.)

Ideally – HSR recognizes the importance of DART with regard to its station location, and will be proactive in reaching out for connections. Given the new HSR board member is a major property owner in The Cedars – we felt there’s strong likelihood he’ll have great potential to expand his developments to accommodate adjacencies. In the end – it’s the adjacencies beyond DART ROW boundaries that will have the biggest impact on ridership.

Yes – I’ll be showing clips of a couple dozen slides that DART has used to get to this point. They’re continuing to weigh a few options on the Harwood and/or Farmers Market stations along the B4 alignments. I’ll show those in the morning too.

Thanks for your well-reasoned feedback! I’ll be prepared to address that in the morning as well – and it’ll be up to the board to give final guidance.

August 3

(Reviewer) makes some convincing and parallel points to some like ours in our meetings. I think (another reviewer) said it best when he talked about how he thinks HSR will be presented – as a station and accessed much like Love Field. I believe that he is right because HSR going longer distances will require luggage and those attendant accommodations. I envision something like a much smaller Grand Central. I believe at this point, we are primarily thinking in terms of “connecting”, which ultimately may not be practical because of the aforementioned scenario.

August 3, 2015

I didn’t respond because it is more of a personal concern than that of a task force concern. The report delivered does not list the methodology that was used to arrive at the conclusion. It only lists the factors for consideration which can be somewhat objective. Regardless of the subjectivity, it appears that GDPC is ready to endorse the (B-4) Alignment. My biggest hesitation is the lack of connectivity and consideration for high-speed rail in that alternative and with DART in general. <snipped> I do believe that coordination with High Speed Rail is essential. I’m hesitant for GDPC to endorse any alignment that does not show coordination with HSR. I understand that we should be cognizant of public expenditures but my biggest priority is to have an effective transit system that is done correctly, rather than just efficiently. Efficiently leaves us with no transit stop at Love Field and a multitude of other issues. Again, that’s just my personal view and personal perspective, not that of task force. It sounds like you are going to be presenting some information on it tomorrow and I look forward to that. Perhaps that discussion will clear up some of my hesitations and concerns.

August 1, 2015

(Reviewer) - your 'horse' is in full flight, no doubt being considered by both the CityMap study underway and the soon to be scheduled DD360 update sessions being undertaken for Downtown Dallas Inc.

Plus we have a great chance to keep these conversations alive with the upcoming joint breakfast mtg with ULI and the Sept 17-18 Going BIG with Small Steps summit.

What we need to do most - as members of GDPC - is be advocates for getting those stakeholders to those conversations.

August 1, 2015

I certainly agree about the realities surrounding those specific observations, but there exists a vacuum of leadership surrounding the bigger picture that is connecting the two systems.

There are definite political realities involved as well (and yes, sometimes leadership is uncomfortable). Yet and still, dialogue can be fostered without stepping on political toes and simply relying on some of the stakeholders to "get it".

As it relates to the big picture I'm referring to, a lunch and learn, forum discussion and/or series of "dream studies" with associated presentations could do wonders. This was the approach taken for the downtown/Trinity River connection issue and I believe it opened the eyes of many.

The D2 alignment and the form it takes is one thing, but the bigger picture is another. Specifically, within GDPC, the end product of this effort (policy, white paper, follow-up policies and efforts) should proactively recognize both and assist in fostering well rounded dialogue amongst all of the stakeholders including citizens. Huge opportunity.

For fear of beating a dead horse, or any other farm animals :), I will rest my case.

August 1, 2015

As do I agree with the importance of those connections of DART and HSR emerging. But for us to maintain our credibility, we must remember our charge and objectives. One does need to be verbally supportive of how HSR relates; but, we also must remember the free-will marketplace nature that our system currently works within. (Landowner's) architects will need to develop those concepts. Ideally – they'll engage feedback from those adjacent stakeholders in those designs.

For DART – there's nothing in their charter that enables them to direct how adjacent property owners choose to relate. Only the City's zoning and development codes can do that. A best outcome for them (and the HSR enterprise) would be that enough nearby stakeholders embrace the value you describe as worth investing in – the outcome will be an energized district that contributes to O&M and further investments. Their key role is ensuring the right-of-way can connect and relate.

We must be sure we embrace the long term vision with short term approaches – to (other reviewer's) point – by planning well. I'm optimistic the DD360 plan update and the CityMap study will help drive some of that potential.

Incrementally – the investors in both HSR and The Cedars will have great opportunities if the planning (is) well done. In DART's D2 decision, simplicity is essential to acceptance by those who will ultimately vote on the LPA. Those opportunities are by their very nature – implied. In the draft I've reviewed – it appears (reviewer/editor) (has) given a nod to that.

Perhaps one of our most important questions to bring up on Aug 20 is to what extent is the City working to accommodate those kinds of edges?

August 1, 2015

We can not underestimate HSR potential impacts nor those of coupling it to DART's network. That would be short sighted.

As is illustrated with declining auto purchases and travel, travel patterns are changing before our eyes.

Yes, people definitely will disembark HSR and jump in (a rideshare) or a taxi if there are no other options. They will also depart the area if there is nothing else around the station to entice them to spend time and money.

Part of the conversation is about planning and positioning. Station area planning, land planning and the coordination of assets, efforts and organizations or at least meaningful dialogue between them all. We can't get there relying on the models of the past.

I'm all for pretty stations and elevated structure (should this option be chosen, appearance is highly important), but there is much more at stake here.

We have to help create the environment in which such game changing decisions can be made. We are behind the curve already, but we should not just let portions of the opportunity just slip away. The P in GDPC is definitely there for a reason.

July 31, 2015

I tend to agree with your perspective. Yes – it'll be a very big deal, and the local property owner will have lots of options to designate what occurs around that landing point. Ideally – more form based would be more resilient to market demands.

It's foreseeable that DART would deploy a small sequence of shuttles during the lead up to departures and following each arrival event based on demand. Ideally – the free market (prop owners), perhaps driven by city planning staff, would take the initiatives to activate those adjacencies according to potential demands.

July 31, 2015

I'm pro HSR. I believe the need to interconnect HSR and DART is obvious. I believe, however, that we need to use caution in making assumptions about its impact, relationship to the CBD and how best to provide the trip to the passenger's final destination. In exchanges with the HSR staff I learned that the train will arrive during peak hours every 30 minutes. The capacity of each train is 400 passengers. I've asked for their assumptions regarding the final destination of the passengers, but I have not received them. My guess is less than ½ will be going to destination that is within walking distance of a DART station. And of that number, many of the business travelers (who can expense the cost) will elect to take a cab or (rideshare). I suspect most passengers going to Houston will likely drive or rideshare to the station, some will cab. Many will ride DART. In many ways I would expect HSR to perform like Love Field, but with a higher percentage of business based trips. There is no question that multi-modal service, including DART LRT, is needed; however, I'm not ready to judge its development impact or service needs.

July 31, 2015

Maybe just to clarify some of my input...

At grade is clearly preferable, any elevated track would be as minimally necessary to separate line crossings.

Even with below grade tunnel, there are two stretches of several hundred feet of open trench at either end, which have a clear urban impact.

The example (another reviewer) has included in his exhibit is simply that, an example of a future possibility and offered to expand the conceptual thought and range of possibilities.

And while I'm in complete agreement on the most of the design and development points, I fear we could muddy the clarity of our report with too much detail.

July 31, 2015

I agree the D2 alignment presents opportunities to activate adjacencies - and I'm a huge advocate of that. DART's budget - quite constrained - isn't likely to be able to cover much beyond accommodations of connections with those spaces. The best this effort can do is attempt to select an alignment that by certain metrics seems most likely to do that. Our worry regarding the City's engagement is valid but has to recognize the free-market nature of how our city gets built out or redeveloped.

This causes me to want to acknowledge how many of, or to what extent the subject parcel owners have had conversations with DART. How have these been characterized in the environmental documentation? (DART staff) has mentioned conversations with several of them, so I'm reasonably confident he's reaching out through this and the preceding process. Without getting into the wildflowers, some explanation of the transparency of this process is in order?

My initial reaction to (submitter's) illustrations is very positive (although I want to see fewer 'dust-catcher' elements), we need to remember that some if not many will not see lingering space in this context as a positive. The differentiator in my mind would be how can the adjacencies become supportive of economic generators (coffee, dining, phone sales, shopping, etc.) that serve to foster rapid turnover rather than accommodating the kind of lingering that occurs around many of the current stations.

As a public transit agency - DART can't activate those spaces; but, must at least strive to support access in proximity to those private investors who see value in DART's passenger turnover. Retail sales tax revenues - in part a direct funding source for DART - should be among the top considerations during these types of discussions.

An immediate impediment to the introduction of those uses will be the City's current development codes. This falls into that area we've described as needing increased support and collaboration from city staff and elected decision makers.

July 31, 2015

Wow! You really captured what I meant by placemaking and high design and functional art.

I vote for this to be one of our recommendations to the GDPPC. *(attached pdf)* I think if we are to be thought leaders, we shouldn't be afraid to push the envelope. The reason the public may have been opposed to part of the system being elevated is because they've never experienced a complete and thoughtful human space such as (contributor) has so aptly rendered. And their only reference is something like the "L" in Chicago, which is terrible.

July 31, 2015

I also want to echo (other reviewer's) emphasis on High Speed Rail, which has the (potential) to turn the Greater Dallas & Houston regions into an economy longer than most states and is a top priority to city staff and the largest job creating employers in downtown.

July 31, 2015

I believe DART has been in conversations with HSR and like the City, the dialog may not be productive, nor given to operating as allies for the betterment of the overarching system(s). (DART) said at one point that they don't feel like (they) should be the one making all of the concessions and absorbing costs to make it convenient for HSR's station(s). So

you are right. Some involvement by the agencies, public, GDPC, and others could be advocates or an ombudsman to promote conversation and encourage a level playing field.

Also, regardless of what elevation the stations occupy, I would encourage the idea that structures do not have to look like TxDOT, but rather have a more creative approach and public appeal. Didn't we say that the millennials will be a large percentage of public transportation modes now and in the future?

July 31, 2015

I agree as well.

I'm not a fan of most of the rail stations and largely because they offer little shelter from the sun and/or rain in most cases (cost consideration I'm sure and maybe safety to a lesser extent).

I do believe a street level line has its benefits. I just wonder if the impacts to vehicular traffic within the downtown grid outweigh the benefits.

To (other reviewer's) point, I do not believe an elevated system will be maintained well. Let alone make it thru the inevitable cuts to the budget that will most likely result in design sacrifices (sometimes you have to be careful about what you fight for). Of course, a bucket of variables must be considered. Many of which will impact the overall cost of the system.

All of the above being said, whichever option is chosen, it is tantamount that adequate consideration be given to design. For an elevated or street level line, the design must take into consideration impacts on adjacent properties including access to rail stations, pedestrian/auto access to buildings and impacts to the ability to develop or redevelop adjacent sites. This must include the input of stakeholders (property owners, DDI, DART, GDPC, and downtown businesses and residents).

Also, station area planning must be brought to the forefront. If done well, this could work in tandem with economic development efforts facilitated by mechanisms such as TIF districts and/or transit districts.

Lastly, I still say, IF AT ALL POSSIBLE IN ANY CAPACITY, consideration should be given to facilitating serious discussions with the city and Texas Central Railroad regarding the possibility of planning the best outcome possible for linking the two systems. This dialogue should also include NCTCOG, the federal government and possibly even the business community. GDPC can help facilitate this meeting of the minds. This is the type of progressive, visionary effort needed to leverage opportunities in this region and successfully position Dallas for the future.

If we can do it to pursue the Super Bowl and the Olympics, surely we can do it for something that is permanent and potentially hugely transformative.

July 30, 2015

It** (image boards provided by Reviewer – Appendix F.) is an attractive design, but I have reservations.

1. Public agencies are not known for delivering high levels of maintenance. Look at North Central Expressway through Dallas. It was a very well designed and an attractive highway that now looks like the poster child of neglected investment.
2. Any separation from the surface level of the street separated the pedestrian from the service and erodes potential ridership. Go to Mockingbird Station. The escalator is frequently out of service and the elevator is as appealing as service station restroom. The same can be said at above grade stations.

3. Most people who advocate grade separation do so because they don't want to interfere with cars. I think car interference is a plus, especially in core urban areas where cars should move slowly, if not discouraged. The train should be integral to street life.

July 29

Here are a few additional thoughts in support of the recommendations:

There is a correlation in the travel patterns in rail and surface road trips (Red Line and US 75). People using both modes are likely in same corridor for the same reason. It is the best path to the destination. Thus, rail patterns should parallel heavily used roads. The more congested the road, the better it is as a transit corridor.

The station is not the destination. Stations need to be as close to the destination(s) as possible. Walking distances need to be short and in a comfortable walking environment.

Commuting to work is the number one reason for using transit. While proximity to other trip attractions is good, it is a secondary consideration.

Most transit uses travel two or more links on transit between the trip origin and destination. That means the interconnection between rail to rail and rail to bus, streetcar, etc. is very important.

The cost of parking is a major factor in using transit. If the supply of parking is high and inexpensive at the destination station, commuters may decide to drive or using transit.

Rail availability alone is not a major inducement to development. The most successful TOD developments are successful due to other locational advantages, including road accessibility, existing anchor attractions, high concentrations of employment/housing, and general market demand. Rail is a major catalyst for TOD in areas already possessing good attributes for development.

July 28, 2015

I'd like to hear how they arrived at changes in ridership by moving the FM station (prox to rooftops, job densities, walk-indexes?), and the current descriptions of affected parcels/population densities affected - that we can compare side by side.

A multi-objective design consideration, should the overhead option stay alive: Overhead sections may require longer than some blocks to climb above street clearances, leading to potential street closures. (DART staff) knows that distance? [Approx. 250 L.F.]

Knowing which blocks aren't long enough to achieve sufficient clearance would inform which streets to consider incorporating into large-scale ped-mall connections --perhaps even trolley or driverless car routes? I advocate doing this along one or more central corridors NS through downtown. Q. can John H. confirm the distance require from ground to overhead so we know what length envelopes are required to elevate, should consideration be given to Overhead?

Partially-elevated sections may accommodate a large scale pedestrian mall beneath those streets? (Close and convert those to 'woonerfs' with could be controlled parking and delivery access. This could create blocks-long lateral ped-way extensions to other downtown streets. Add good crosswalks at those.