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Board forwards Financial Plan to cities for review DART President/Executive Director reorganizes agency leadership

Following more than three months of study, the DART Board of Directors has voted to send a draft long-range Financial Plan supporting future rail projects to its 13 member cities for a 30-day review. The Board is scheduled to adopt a final version of the plan as early as April 8.

The Plan supports the construction of a 14-mile Orange Line northwest to the Las Colinas Urban Center in 2011 and to Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport in 2013, as well as a 4.75-mile extension of DART's existing Blue Line to Rowlett in 2012. The Plan also supports the Downtown Dallas Transit Study, including a second rail line through the Dallas Central Business District with revenue service scheduled for 2014 and a Blue Line extension from Ledbetter Station to I-20 in 2018. Combined, these projects are projected to cost approximately \$2.3 billion. Funding strategies have been identified to address the shortfall.

DART's 28-mile Green Line project, connecting Pleasant Grove and Carrollton, remains on schedule and on budget. The \$1.8 billion project began in late summer 2006. The first phase of the project, Downtown Dallas to Fair Park, is scheduled to open in September 2009 in time for the State Fair of Texas. The rest of the project is scheduled to open in December 2010.

DART leadership restructured

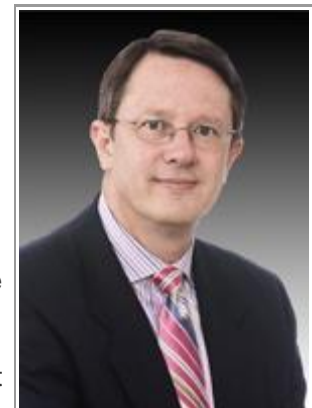
President/Executive Director Gary Thomas has restructured the agency's top staff leadership to give him direct access and oversight of rail construction projects. The new management plan better aligns day-to-day operations and administrative functions under distinct leaders and a concentrated focus on all of DART's other capital (non-rail) projects.

"These changes, while difficult, help us have better day-to-day oversight of these very complex projects," Thomas said. "They will help us monitor project costs more aggressively and will support our efforts to communicate our progress to our stakeholders and customers."

Work on this new management alignment has been in the works for the last few months but was subsequently delayed as DART staff focused on solving the financial challenges of the rail projects. "I am using the best minds throughout the agency to insure controls are in place which better address market anomalies as they occur."

The changes are effective immediately.

Thomas says he is implementing recommendations from the audit process including improving internal communications and ensuring on-going updates to the Board and member cities, at pre-defined time periods, that cover industry trends, inflationary issues, market conditions and any other factors that have the potential to impact the agency projects.



DART
President/Executive
Director Gary Thomas

Thomas says he must now concentrate on moving the agency forward while acknowledging lessons learned from this experience - specifically his decision to delay informing the Board of Directors of the dramatic spike in the rail expansion project costs.

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