

LOCAL NEWS

DCTA charts Plan B

Officials hope to change membership process to get other cities on track

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By Bj Lewis / Staff Writer

The Denton County Transportation Authority is working on a Plan B for cities to become members.

DCTA currently has three member cities — Denton, Lewisville and Highland Village — but with recent legislative action, officials hope to change the membership process and entice more cities to come in and help the agency grow.

“Recognizing some cities don’t have additional sales tax to give, we looked at other ways they could dedicate a finance source,” said Dee Leggett, vice president of communications and planning for DCTA.

To that end, agency officials worked with the 82nd Legislature to change Chapter 460 in the Texas transportation code, which created DCTA, to allow finance zones.

Currently, DCTA’s three member cities each give a portion of their sales taxes to the agency to help fund its bus and rail operations. Other cities were given the opportunity to buy in at the outset but could not spare the portion of sales taxes.

With the alternative, the finance zones would be similar to tax increment finance districts, where incremental revenues of sales tax and property taxes would be dedicated to fund the transportation services within that zone.

Leggett said agency officials first looked at the option when there was talk of a station in the Lake Cities area.

“This finance zone is a great way to get investment and transit started with cities already capped out in sales tax,” she said.

There has been no talk yet of cities interested in signing on, but Leggett is optimistic about the chances in the future.

“The bill just got passed and we’re working on an update to our service plan,” she said. “Once it is approved [ideally] in December by the board, we can sit down with the cities. We have not received any official interest as of late from any other cities; we just want to be prepared and have the conditions set when a city can join DCTA.”

She said the transition to having a station would not be too difficult for the cities. What it would require, she said, would be a collaborative effort between DCTA and the potential member city, to make sure the relationship is mutually beneficial and that the site would work for access to the railroad, right of way, ridership potential and development around the site.

“It’s not impossible. We obviously want to grow our system and expand on the A-train, and we need additional cities to do that,” Leggett said.

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GNAT 1

10:29 AM on 11/25/2011

Score: -1

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HCB: reread the article. This is for the good of DCTA so it can expand its financial base not for the residents of the affected areas. The cities win as property values around the site skyrocket, DCTA win as they get a new source of money, and the residents get to pay the bill. Votes have defeated the issue 2 times so, will third time be the charm or three strikes and your out. One can only assume DCTA and the city will try to put together a campaign to get out their people to get a station. After all there are millions to be made and the residents are probably getting tired of voting on the issue.

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3 replies



HelpCorinthBudget

7:34 AM on 11/25/2011

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Corinth needs to do some research before considering joining DCTA. I do not know of one citizen of Corinth that uses the A Train.

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