

***Colleyville Commuter Rail
Committee
Final Report***

December 16, 2008

Committee Critical Learnings

The commuter rail connection of Fort Worth to DFW Airport, and eventually into Dallas, is a key piece of the regional transportation picture. Colleyville is part of the overall region and will clearly be impacted by the changes occurring in our neighboring cities. Even with massive improvements to our highway system, the current congestion is projected to swell dramatically. As a result, other transportation alternatives must be considered.

Downtown Fort Worth to DFW is a Minimum Operating Segment (MOS) that will be built as a “starter” if funding is made available. Trains will operate through Colleyville irrespective of whether a rail station exists. Expanded train operations through the City of Colleyville may establish a new baseline for noise, traffic disruptions, safety, and nearby property valuations. Whether there is a station stop in Colleyville or not, commuter rail operations will present certain issues to our City that must be addressed and mitigated.

Committee Critical Learnings

The majority of current information available and factors used in the evaluation of commuter rail exist at a regional level. The examination of the specific impact to the City of Colleyville will require:

- **continued monitoring of the commuter line's design and development;**
- **detailed studies performed by professional firms in order to examine the overall impact;**
- **negotiation with the "T" to ensure the safety, environmental and aesthetic standards of the City are maintained;**
- **detailed examination of regional or federal options for funding of studies, the station construction, and ongoing operations; and,**
- **additional public input throughout the process.**

The Committee's experience is that the continual evolution of information makes objective decisions about the station a "moving target" which will require conscious and professional involvement going forward.

Benefits of Commuter Rail as a Transportation Alternative

If public transportation is not a future necessity, it is definitely a future transportation benefit. The citizens of Colleyville should be given a transportation choice. Without a station, Colleyville citizens would have to access outlier stations along the rail line. A station within Colleyville would provide a convenience to many of our citizens.

Commuter rail and a Colleyville station provide the opportunity for:

- **Access to a modern commuter rail system which can be accessed within Colleyville's borders – being primarily paid for by regional/federal resources**
- **Reduced automobile costs for mass transportation users**
- **Convenience**
- **Access to the resources of the broader region**
- **Reduced highway traffic (*e.g.*, traffic jams, accidents)**
- **Transportation for non-drivers/car owners such as senior citizens, students, and others within the workforce**
- **Improved air quality**
- **More relaxing commutes – less driving related stress**
- **Potential Transit-Oriented Development**

Primary Concern/Focus Areas

Area	Commuter Rail Operation	Colleyville Station
Public Safety	X	X
Noise	X	X
Pollution	X	X
Property Values	X	X
Traffic Congestion	X	X
Crime		X
Station Location & Design		X
Total Cost		X

Public Safety

Increases in train traffic, as well as train speeds, will increase the probability of pedestrian and/or vehicular interface with trains. The risk of accident occurrence will increase.

The Committee Recommends:

- 1. Quad gates/vehicle barriers be installed at the three grade crossings in Colleyville.**
- 2. Physical separation be engineered between rail right-of-way and the existing and future hike/bike trail.**
- 3. Educational awareness programs relating to increased train traffic at increased speeds be initiated for all citizens, with special emphasis for children.**
- 4. Colleyville emergency responders receive additional training relating to railroad related incidents.**

Noise

Increased train traffic will increase noise levels (*e.g.*, horns, engines, wheel to rail contact). The Committee lacks the technical expertise to provide a thorough in-depth confirmation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) noise level narrative.

The Committee Recommends:

- 5. Quiet zones be established at the three crossings in Colleyville.**
- 6. Commuter rail authority provide mitigation for all homes or businesses subject to moderate or severe noise level impact.**
- 7. If Council questions the DEIS noise level study/narrative, an independent testing authority should be employed to determine the accuracy of the DEIS study and conclusions.**

Pollution

The Committee lacks the planning information and technical expertise to provide a critical in-depth confirmation of the DEIS pollution data and conclusions. Two conflicting factors include:

- The DEIS has concluded that the operation of the train will reduce pollution in the corridor by reducing vehicle miles traveled as well as vehicle hours traveled.
- Increased train traffic and a commuter rail station may increase Colleyville pollution due to trains, buses, and commuter vehicle traffic.

The Committee Recommends:

- 8. Council should ensure a technical review of the DEIS demonstrates pollution is not increased in Colleyville due to the proposed commuter rail operations and station related activities.**

Property Values

Commuter trains operating through the City may set a new baseline for property values located in the immediate vicinity of the railroad right-of-way. A station stop located in Colleyville may establish a new baseline for property values located in close proximity to that station. In addition, access to commuter rail may create a new baseline for the City property valuations as a whole. The Committee could find no comparative empirical information as to determine what those new baselines might be.

The Committee Recommends:

- 9. The City undertake an Economic Impact Study of the proposed station site and adjacent property tracts to identify best property use. The study would provide information regarding the impacts to property values and tax revenues.**

Traffic

Traffic will be interrupted at Colleyville's three road grade crossings due to the increased frequency of train traffic. Independent of the commuter rail, vehicular traffic on SH26 is projected to increase as a result of population growth in the surrounding area. Increased traffic delays will occur at John McCain and SH26 due to increased commuter rail traffic. Based upon crossing arm timing at the intersection of John McCain and SH26, traffic delays at that intersection resulting from a rail station would not exceed the delays created by train operations alone.

The Committee Recommends:

- 10. The City undertake an in-depth traffic study for all three grade crossings to determine the effects of commuter rail operations, proposed station activities, highway changes, and traffic growth and what mitigation is necessary to address traffic congestion/interruption due to proposed commuter rail activities, and proposed station activities.**

Crime

If a station stop is established in Colleyville, crime may increase at that station stop. In researching commuter rail stations in other cities, the Colleyville Police Department (CPD) research found no evidence of increases in major crimes. However, CPD is anticipating increases in parking lot crimes at the station stop.

The Committee Recommends:

- 11. The Colleyville Police Department provide the Council a detailed plan regarding staffing, activities, and costs directly related to proposed commuter rail stations activity. Also, Council should commission CPD to conduct a formal study with regard to potential criminal activity in and around the proposed station.**

Station Considerations

The proposed station location at John McCain and SH26 may result in negative impacts to neighborhoods in the immediate vicinity of the station, as well as the broader City of Colleyville, due to increased accessibility and activity.

The Committee Recommends:

- 12. The City undertake a Transit-Oriented Development Study of the proposed station site and adjacent property tracts to identify economic development opportunities around the station and the types of development best suited for the area.**
- 13. Before the City undertakes the establishment of a commuter rail station, a definitive plan be established to address the potential issue of commuter parking overflowing into Colleyville neighborhoods surrounding the station.**
- 14. The aesthetic design of the station be consistent with the City's standards.**
- 15. The station not be designed or operated as a bus transfer station.**

Station Cost

The cost and operation of a station and any mitigation for the commuter rail operations should not be borne by the City/citizens of Colleyville.

The Committee Recommends:

- 16. Funding for station design, construction, and operational costs should be from regional/federal sources. City property taxes should not be raised, nor any City services compromised or reduced to fund a station stop or commuter rail operations in Colleyville.**
- 17. Consideration of a station stop should not be entertained if external funding is not forthcoming.**

Concluding Recommendations

In addition to the previous recommendations outlined in this presentation, the Colleyville Commuter Rail Committee recommends:

- 18. Unanimously, that the City of Colleyville continues to participate in the studies being conducted by the "T" related to the Southwest-to-Northeast Rail Corridor Project.**
- 19. From a Committee majority, that given adherence to all Committee recommendations outlined in this presentation, and that any and all future adverse impacts be mitigated, a commuter rail station stop be established in Colleyville.**

APPENDIX

Summary of Recommendations

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