

John Hoppie

From: Oliphant, Marc (FTA) <marc.oliphant@dot.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 4:36 PM
To: John Hoppie; Kay Shelton
Cc: Lyssy, Gail (FTA); MacFarlane, John <FAA>; terence.plaskon@dot.gov; David Ehrlicher; Nick Stadem (nicholas.stadem@hdrinc.com); Victor Ibewuiké; Reza Shirmanesh; Thomas Lebeau; Darwin Desen; Tracey Lober, PE; mantych@burns-group.com; echitsinde@dfwairport.com; Koski, Donald (FTA); Bartels, David (FTA); Wallace, Laura (FTA)
Subject: [External] RE: Silver Line Memo to File Phase B

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Dear Mr. Hoppie,

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has reviewed the supplemental environmental documentation (Memo to File Phase B) DART submitted for the Silver Line (Cotton Belt) Regional Rail Project on December 16, 2021. DART proposes four project changes: (1) Elimination of DFW pocket track; (2) Deferral of DFW North Through Platform; (3) Elimination of Oncor Tower Relocation at Cypress Waters Station; and (4) Addition of new at-grade crossing – Huntington Road. FTA determines that, in accordance with 23 CFR 771.129, the modifications to the Silver Line would not result in any substantial impact to the quality of the human environment, and the previously approved FEIS/ROD of November 9, 2018 remains valid.

If you have any further questions, please contact FTA Region VI.

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From: John Hoppie <JHoppie@dart.org>
Sent: Thursday, December 16, 2021 1:46 PM
To: Oliphant, Marc (FTA) <marc.oliphant@dot.gov>; MacFarlane, John <FAA> <john.macfarlane@faa.gov>
Cc: Plaskon, Terence (FTA) <Terence.Plaskon@dot.gov>; Kay Shelton <KShelton@dart.org>; David Ehrlicher <DEhrlicher@dart.org>; Nick Stadem (nicholas.stadem@hdrinc.com) <nicholas.stadem@hdrinc.com>; Victor Ibewuiké <Ibewuiké@dart.org>; Reza Shirmanesh <RShirman@dart.org>; Thomas Lebeau <TLebeau1@dart.org>; Darwin Desen <DDesen2@dart.org>; Tracey Lober, PE <tlobber@burns-group.com>; mantych@burns-group.com; echitsinde@dfwairport.com; Koski, Donald (FTA) <Donald.Koski@dot.gov>; Bartels, David (FTA) <david.bartels@dot.gov>
Subject: Silver Line Memo to File Phase B

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Marc/John,

In accordance with 23 CFR 771.129 and as we indicated in the Mitigation Monitoring Program Update #11, DART is preparing a series of Memoranda to File to address project Changes to the Silver Line (Cotton Belt) Regional Rail Project. Previously DART submitted a memo to address the relocation of the of the EMF from the TRE to a joint rail operating facility with DCTA in Lewisville. The attached memo addresses the next phase of project changes. Additional memo will be forthcoming to address the additional changes as the changes are finalized.

John Hoppie
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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 16, 2021

TO: Project File
Marc Oliphant, FTA Region 6

FROM: Kay Shelton, Interim Vice President, Capital Planning
John Hoppie, Silver Line, Planning Project Manager

SUBJECT: DART Cotton Belt Corridor Design-Build Changes: Memo to File Phase B

Introduction

In accordance with 23 CFR 771.129, this memorandum documents changes to the Cotton Belt Corridor Regional Rail Project (Silver Line) that have occurred since the signing of the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Record of Decision (FEIS/ROD) on November 9, 2018. The FEIS/ROD was approved by both the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as lead agency and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as cooperating agency. These changes occur throughout the Project in the cities of Grapevine (DFW Airport), Coppell, Dallas, Carrollton, Richardson, and Plano. The DART Silver Line is scheduled to begin operation on the Cotton Belt Corridor in 2024.

These changes are the result of agency coordination and design modifications to enhance the project and reduce the cost. These changes are not deemed significant and additional environmental documentation is not necessary.

The following changes and the need to prepare a memorandum to file was identified in Mitigation Monitoring Program Update # 11 as Mitigation Measure **GEN-2**. The changes identified to date are depicted in **Attachment 1, Exhibit 1** (Phase B projects highlighted in Yellow and are the subject of this memorandum):

- Phase A
 - EMF/Yard Lead relocation (Approved 11/12/20)
- Phase B
 - Elimination of DFW pocket track (Phase B)
 - Deferral of DFW North Through Platform (Phase B)
 - Elimination of Oncor Tower Relocation at Cypress Waters Station (Phase B)
 - Addition of new at-grade crossing – Huntington Road (Phase B)
- Future Phases
 - Freight Island Siding (Future Phase)
 - Track/Station Reconfiguration in Downtown Carrollton (Future Phase)
 - Adaptive Reuse of White Rock Creek Bridge (Future Phase)
 - Modification to the grade separation of Hillcrest Road (Future Phase)
 - Modification to the grade separation of Coit Road (Future Phase)

- 10th Street Industries Refiguration (Future Phase)
- Custer Grade Separation (Future Phase)
- Jupiter Grade Separation (Future Phase)
- Layover Track (Future Phase)
- Real Estate Acquisitions (Future Phase)

A memorandum to file documenting the potential impacts associated with the relocation of the Equipment Maintenance Facility (EMF) from Irving to Lewisville was approved by FTA on November 12, 2020. This memorandum documented the Phase A project change. The remaining projects are in various stages of analysis, design, or approval.

The Project's effects on the existing social, environmental, economic, and transportation environment were assessed and document in the FEIS/ROD in coordination with the public and interested agencies. DART will implement, as necessary, all mitigation to which the FEIS commits and will coordinate with the public and agencies during the Design-Build phase as stipulated in the FEIS. The mitigation measures and other project features that avoid or reduce adverse impacts are incorporated into the Project and are summarized in the ROD. The FEIS provides a complete description of these mitigation measures and design features. DART is designing and building the Project in accordance with the mitigation measures contained in the FEIS and documented in the ROD. DART has established a Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP) to provide a means for DART and FTA to track the progress in accomplishing the mitigation commitments. The MMP is implemented and monitored by DART through quarterly updates of the MMP. The summary table, also located in the ROD, formed the basis of the MMP. Mitigation measures referenced in this letter to file are identified by the mitigation measure identification number in column a of the table.

Financial Considerations

The Silver Line is being financed through a federal loan program called Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF), along with a combination of other federal, regional and local sources including FTA Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds.

Phase B Project Changes

Four project changes have now been finalized and are documented in this Phase B Memorandum to File. They are:

- B1.** Elimination of DFW pocket track
- B2.** Deferral of DFW North Through Platform
- B3.** Elimination of Oncor Tower Relocation at Cypress Waters Station
- B4.** Addition of new at-grade crossing – Huntington Road

These Phase B changes to the project are highlighted in yellow in **Attachment 1, Exhibit 1** and described in more detail in the following sections. The remaining project changes will be documented and submitted to FTA for review and approval in subsequent memorandum phases.

B1. Elimination of pocket track (DFW Airport)

As described in **Sections 2.3.1, 2.3.5 and 6.2** of the **FEIS**, Trinity Metro (TEXRail) has constructed a single-track rail alignment extending from DFW Terminal B to the DFW North Station. As part of the Cotton Belt Project DART would construct a second track and a siding in this corridor. Hereafter, this siding is referred as the DFW Pocket Track. The planned location of the DFW Pocket Track is shown in **Exhibit 1** in **Attachment 2**.

As described in the *Operations Simulation Methodology and Results Report* (**Appendix B.18** of the **FEIS**) a short pocket track between DFW North and DFW Terminal B will allow one train at a time from either service to vacate the revenue track and allow another trip of the same service to pass on the single-track section. The use of the pocket would allow the Silver Line to sustain a 20-minute headway when operations are increased in the future.

Advancing the design of the Silver Line Project revealed that there are utilities that cross the rail corridor in the vicinity of the DFW Pocket Track, which were installed during the Trinity Metro TEXRail construction. This includes an Oncor electric line that serves the ASR-9 Radar Tower. (As discussed in **Section 6.4.1.7** of the **FEIS**, FAA ASR-9 tower is adjacent to the alignment at DFW Airport). Constructing the pocket track would require extensive excavation and installation of retaining walls that would conflict with these utilities. As identified in Mitigation Measure **COR-31** of the **FEIS/ROD**, DART will attempt to minimize and mitigate disruption of utilities during construction. Additionally, DFW Airport staff have expressed a desire to avoid the utility impacts at the airport.

Other relevant Impacts/Mitigations identified in **FEIS/ROD** at this location included:

- **DFW-11:** The use of DFW Airport land needed to build and operate the Project will be gained through a Public Mass Transit Easement agreement between DART and DFW Airport. DFW Airport will be compensated fair market value for the use.
- **DFW-12:** Potential Vibration impact to ASR-9 tower. Coordination with the FAA will continue for the ASR-9 tower and a determination of potential mitigation measures that may be required will be made during the regional rail testing period.

The elimination of the Pocket Track has several benefits:

- Eliminates major utility relocations
- Eliminates construction electrical outages
- Reduces excavation
- Reduces DFW property acquisition (Mass Transit Easement)
- Eliminates construction of approximately 1,900 feet of track
- Eliminates special trackwork connecting the pocket track to the TEXRail and Silver Line Tracks at four locations
- Reduces potential construction disruption of TEXRail Service
- Reduces construction duration on DFW property
- Reduces construction, material, and right-of-way costs

Additionally, the elimination of the DFW Pocket Track will also reduce the potential for a vibration impact to ASR-9. Besides reducing the number of tracks proximate to the radar facility, the special trackwork connecting the two rail lines to the pocket track would also be eliminated. As discussed in the FTA *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual* (September 2018), wheel impacts at special trackwork, such as frogs at crossovers, create much higher vibration forces than typical track conditions. Because of the higher vibration levels at special trackwork, crossovers are the principal areas of vibration impact on new systems.

As committed in Mitigation Measure **DFW-12**, coordination with the FAA will continue for the ASR-9 tower and a determination of potential mitigation measures that may be required will be made during the regional rail testing period. DART will participate with the testing to determine if an additional track and increased frequency will result in any impacts.

DART with its consultants have determined that configuration of tracks at the DFW North Station could serve the same function as the pocket track and future 20-minute headways, in coordination with TEXRail, could be achievable.

B1. Conclusion

The track configuration at the DFW North Station eliminates the need for the DFW Pocket Track. The elimination this track reduces property acquisition, reduces utility impacts and reduces the potential for vibration impacts to FAA Tower ASR-9. This design change does not appear to add any new impacts and has been requested by DFW Airport. No additional environmental study is warranted.

B2. Deferral of DFW North “Through” Platform (DFW Airport)

As described in **Section 2.3.1** of the **FEIS**, the DFW North Station complex will also include a future pass-through platform that would allow for east-west “through” service to Fort Worth without entering the DFW central terminal area. (see **Exhibit 1 in Attachment 3**). An Architectural Site Plan of the for the DFW North Through Platform from **FEIS Appendix A.4** is shown in **Exhibit 2 in Attachment 3**.

Initially, the Silver Line will operate only into DFW Terminal B. Passengers may transfer to and from TEXRail Service at either the DFW North Station and the DFW Terminal B Station. In the future, it is anticipated that “through” movements could bypass the segment into the Terminal B Station and operate through the DFW North Station to the west via the TEXRail Corridor. Passengers could transfer via a short walk between the “through” platform to either TEXRail or the Silver Line into DFW Terminal B.

Additional double tracking of the TEXRail Corridor, by Trinity Metro, would be required to operate the “through” service. As a cost saving measure, DART has opted to defer construction of the through platform until this additional TEXRail infrastructure is in place and cross-corridor service is possible.

The **FEIS/ROD** evaluated the “through” platform and did not identify any specific impacts or mitigations associated with this platform. The “through” platform, which could be constructed at any time in the future and will be located entirely within the DART owned Cotton Belt railroad corridor. No additional property would be required.

B2. Conclusion

The deferral of the DFW North “Through” Platform does not appear to change any of the findings for the FEIS /ROD. No additional environmental study is warranted.

B3. Elimination of Oncor Tower Relocations in Cypress Waters

As discussed in **Section 4.21.3** of the **FEIS**, a high-voltage electric transmission line bisects the parking lot at the Cypress Waters Station area and crosses the rail line on a skew. Oncor policy regulates development under the transmission line. **Exhibit 1** in **Attachment 4** illustrates the transmission line in relation to the station.

As identified in Mitigation Measure **CB1-4** of the **FEIS/ROD**, DART would relocate one or two of the transmission towers in Cypress Waters area to reconfigure the transmission lines crossing of the rail and station. Mitigation Measure **CB1-2** recommended additional archeological testing is for the Oncor transmission tower relocations. Subject to further design, the tower relocations would have likely required additional environmental analysis.

Ongoing coordination with Oncor eliminated the need to relocate the towers. DART slightly adjusted the alignment to pull the rail away from the base of a tower without requiring any relocation. Oncor sag analysis of the existing wires they found that the wires were sagging below the 34' min clearance required in the Cypress Waters station area. To eliminate the sag, DART will add two new poles to raise and support the transmission lines. The new poles will be significantly smaller than the existing towers and will be located within the station parking lot islands (See **Exhibit 2** in **Attachment 4**). The alignment shift and additional poles are within the environmentally cleared area and does not alter the property acquisition needs.

B3. Conclusion

The elimination of the Oncor Tower Relocations resulted in significant cost savings and eliminated the potential for additional environmental impacts and mitigations associated with the relocations. The design change which includes adding two utility poles within the station footprint does not add any new impacts. No additional environmental study is warranted.

B4. Addition of New At-grade Crossing – Huntington Road at Cypress Waters

During final design, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), the City of Dallas, the City of Coppell and the Cypress Waters developers requested a new at-grade crossing of the Silver Line. As part of the area development process, it was determined that a new roadway was needed that would cross the Cypress Waters diversion rail line. **Section 2.3.1** of the **FEIS/ROD** describe Cypress Waters diversion. The new roadway, Huntington Road, would be located within the City of Dallas on property owned by the City of Coppell. Huntington Road would primarily serve the Cypress Waters Development and provide additional access to the Cypress Waters Station.

Coming from the south the roadway would cross the Silver Line approximately 550 feet east of the Cypress Waters Station. After crossing the rail corridor, Huntington Road turns into E. Belt Line Road approximately 300 feet north of the corridor. **Exhibit 1 in Attachment 5** shows the roadway concept. It is anticipated that roadway construction funding would be by others. DART would design and construct the crossing within the limits of the rail right-of-way only. Roadway crossing design includes necessary changes in drainage, track, retaining wall and pavement drawings. As the Huntington Road crossing was not added until completion of the **FEIS/ROD**, no impacts or mitigations were identified. Potential impacts include Traffic, Safety and Noise.

Traffic Impacts

The roadway design is being coordinated through the NCTCOG. The cities of Dallas and Coppell have conducted their own traffic analysis and are satisfied that the roadway and its crossings will operate at an acceptable level of service and that cueing will not be an issue. No traffic impacts are anticipated.

Pedestrian Impacts

The pedestrian design is also being coordinated through the NCTCOG. Full sidewalks are included on both sides of the 4-lane, median divided roadway. These sidewalks will tie into the existing pedestrian network and the Cotton Belt Trail which will parallel to the rail line. As identified in Mitigation Measure **COR-12**, the crossing will feature signage, a designated crossing, and adequate lighting as required to mitigate the potential for accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists. The new roadway will provide a new safe pedestrian crossing of the rail alignment. There are no schools in the vicinity of the crossing. No pedestrian or safety impacts are anticipated.

Noise Impacts

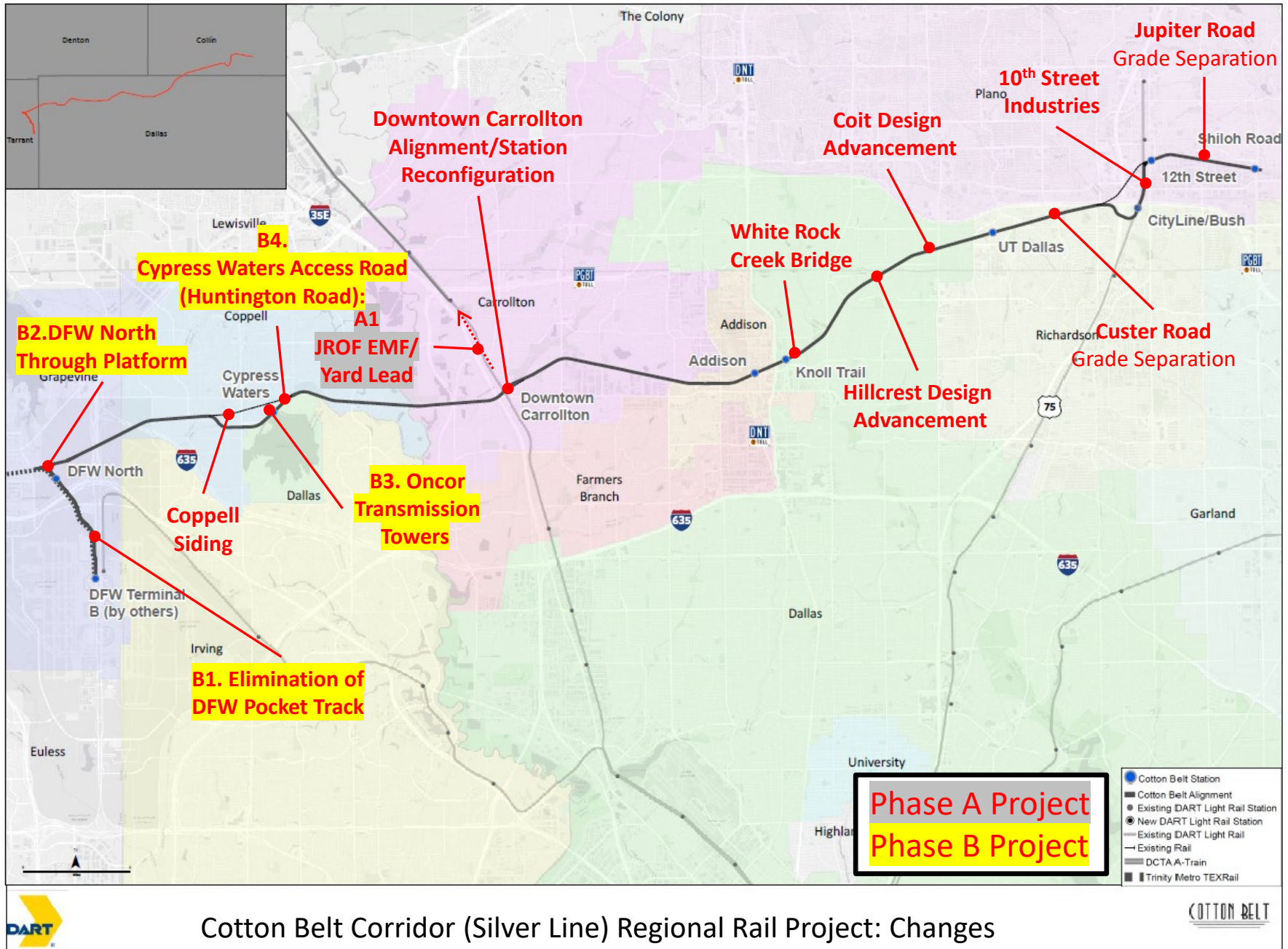
One residential neighborhood, Kira Court, is located approximately 500 feet from the Huntington Road crossing. The **FEIS/ROD** did not identify any noise impacts to Kira as a result of Silver Line operations without the crossing. The added crossing does; however, have the potential to have noise impacts due to train horns and crossing signals. To mitigate this potential, DART is working with the City of Dallas to implement a quiet zone at this crossing. This mitigation measure will be added to Mitigation Measure **CB1-3**, that identifies the quiet zones in the Coppell/Cypress Waters area. Similar to all crossings along the project, the use of directional, electronic bells will be employed at this crossing. This will also reduce levels. There are no other noise sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the crossing. With the addition of a new quiet zone, no noise impacts are anticipated.

B4. Conclusion

The addition of the new Huntington Road grade crossing will not result in any unmitigated impacts. Potential noise impacts will be mitigated through quiet zones and bell mitigation. No additional environmental study is warranted.

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Cotton Belt (Silver Line)
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Attachment 1
General Exhibits

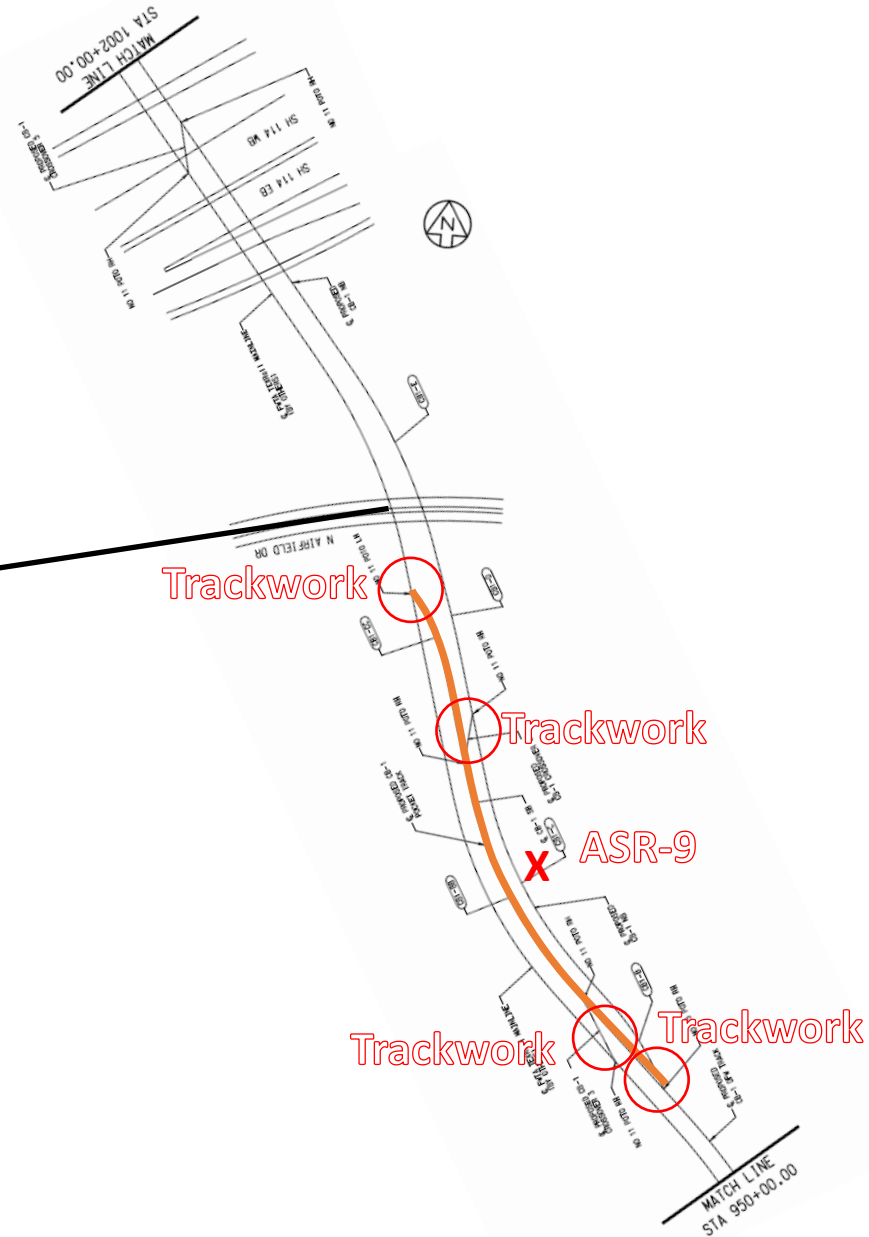
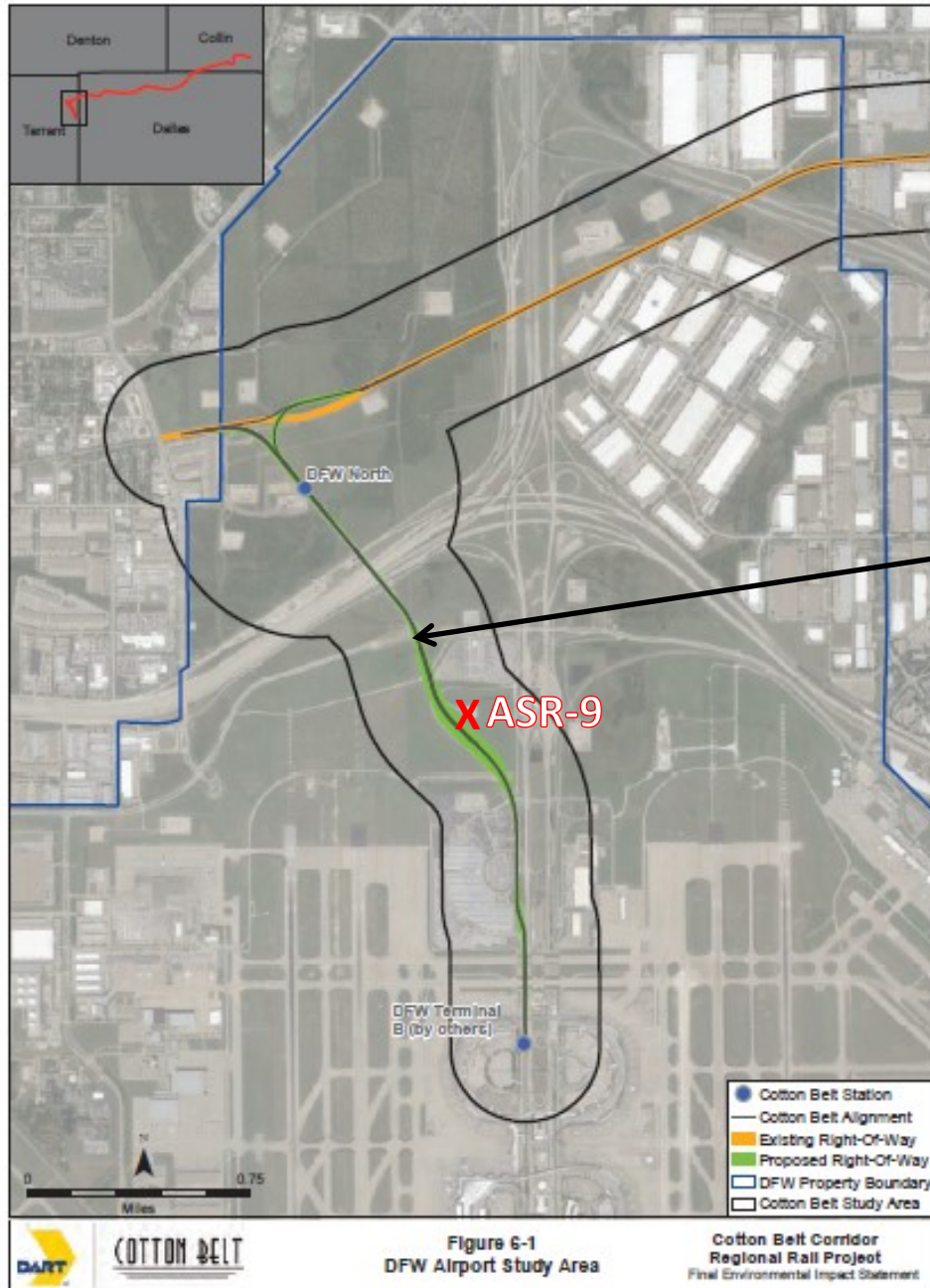


Cotton Belt Corridor (Silver Line) Regional Rail Project: Changes

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Attachment 2

B1. Elimination of DFW Pocket Tracks
Exhibits

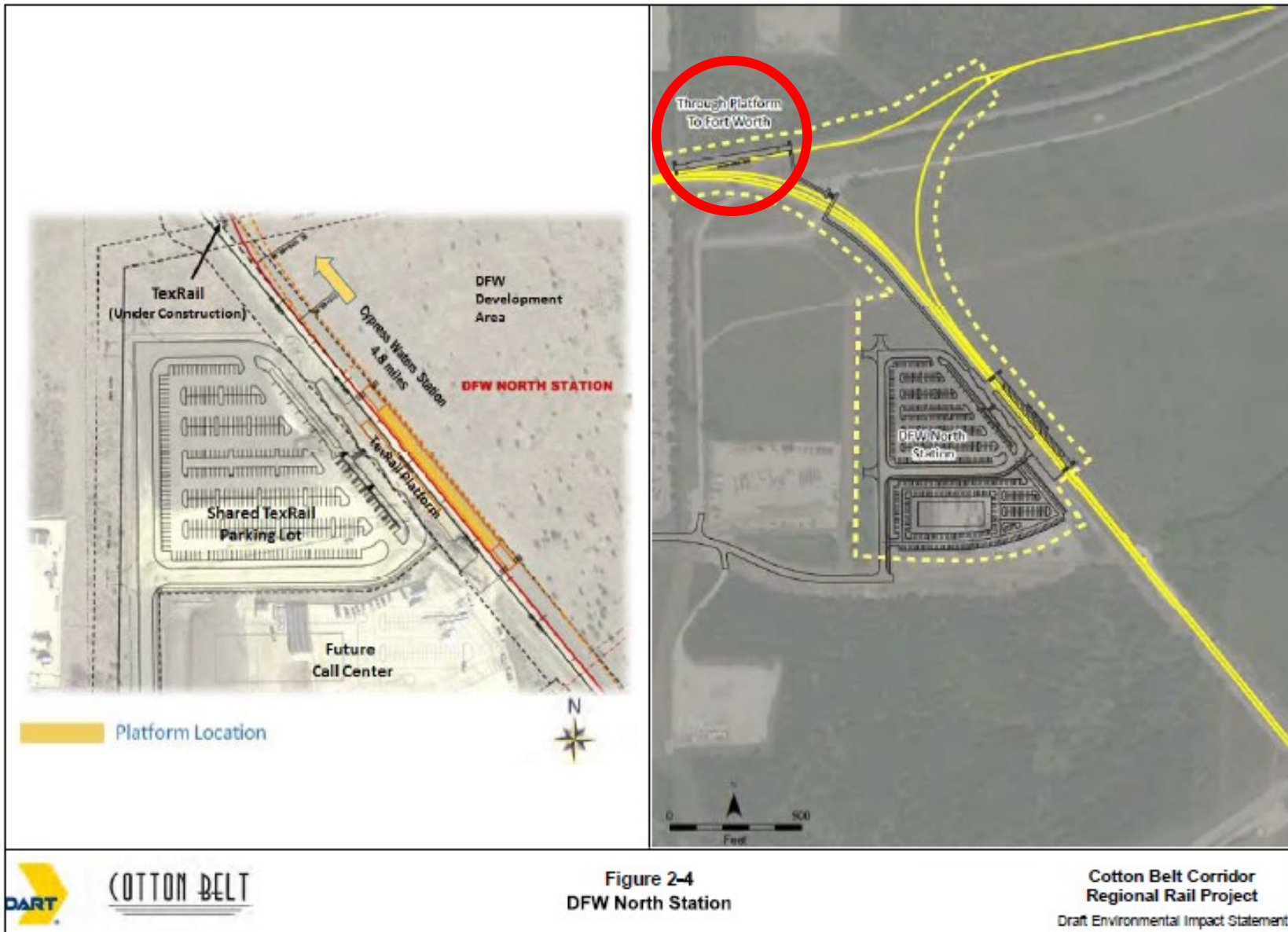


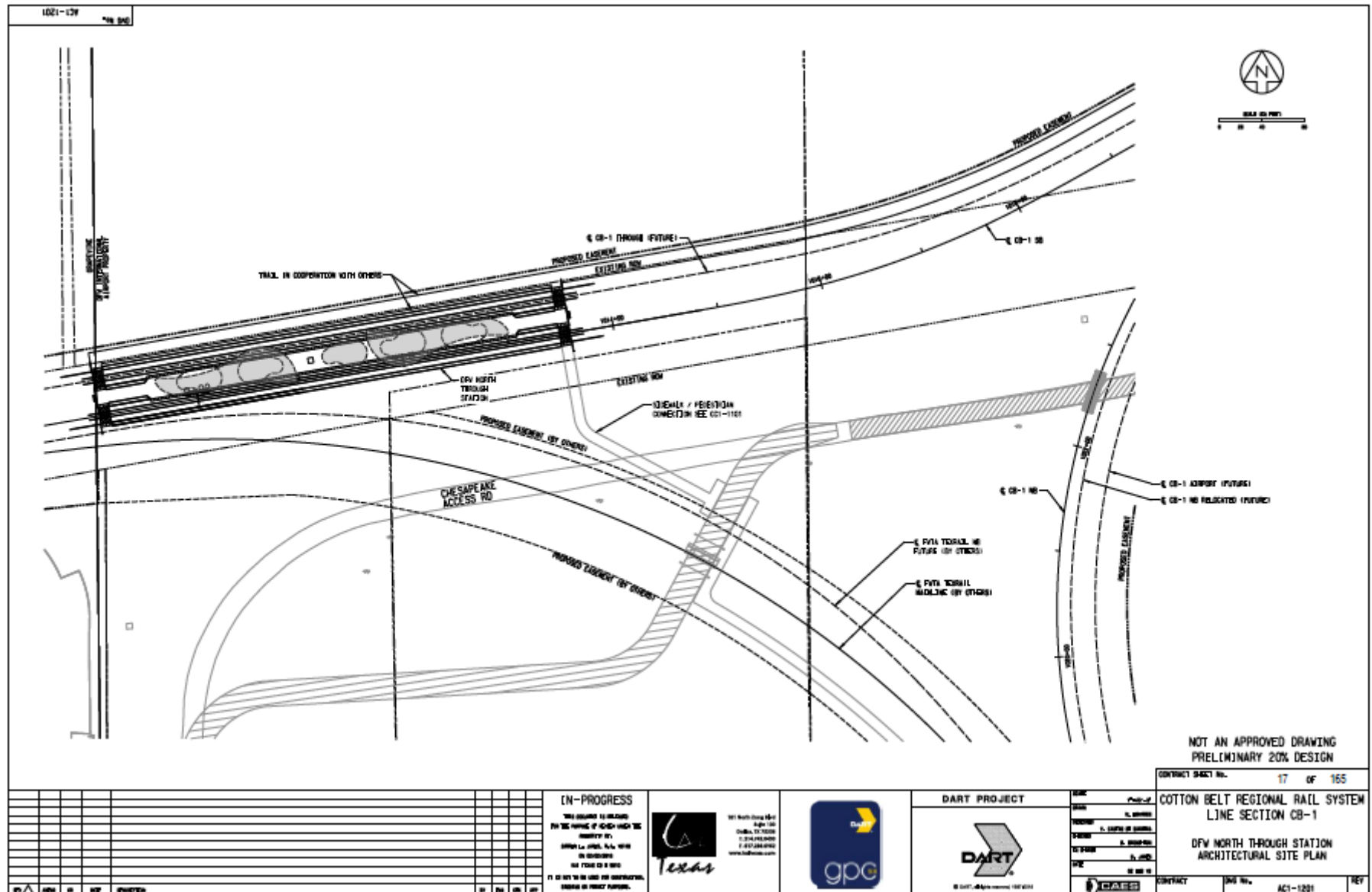
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Attachment 3

B2. Deferral of DFW North Through Platform
Exhibits

DFW North Through Platform (From FEIS)



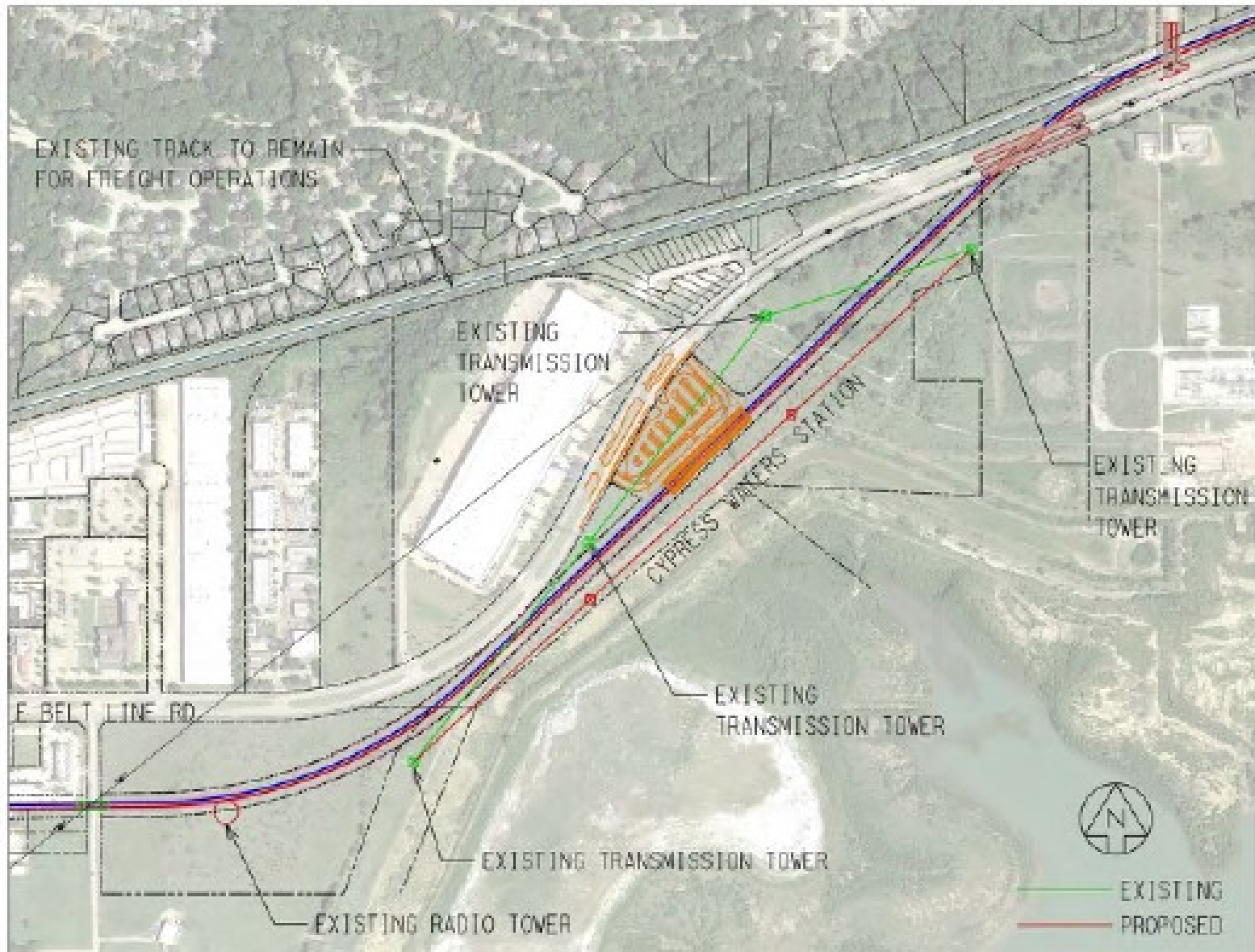


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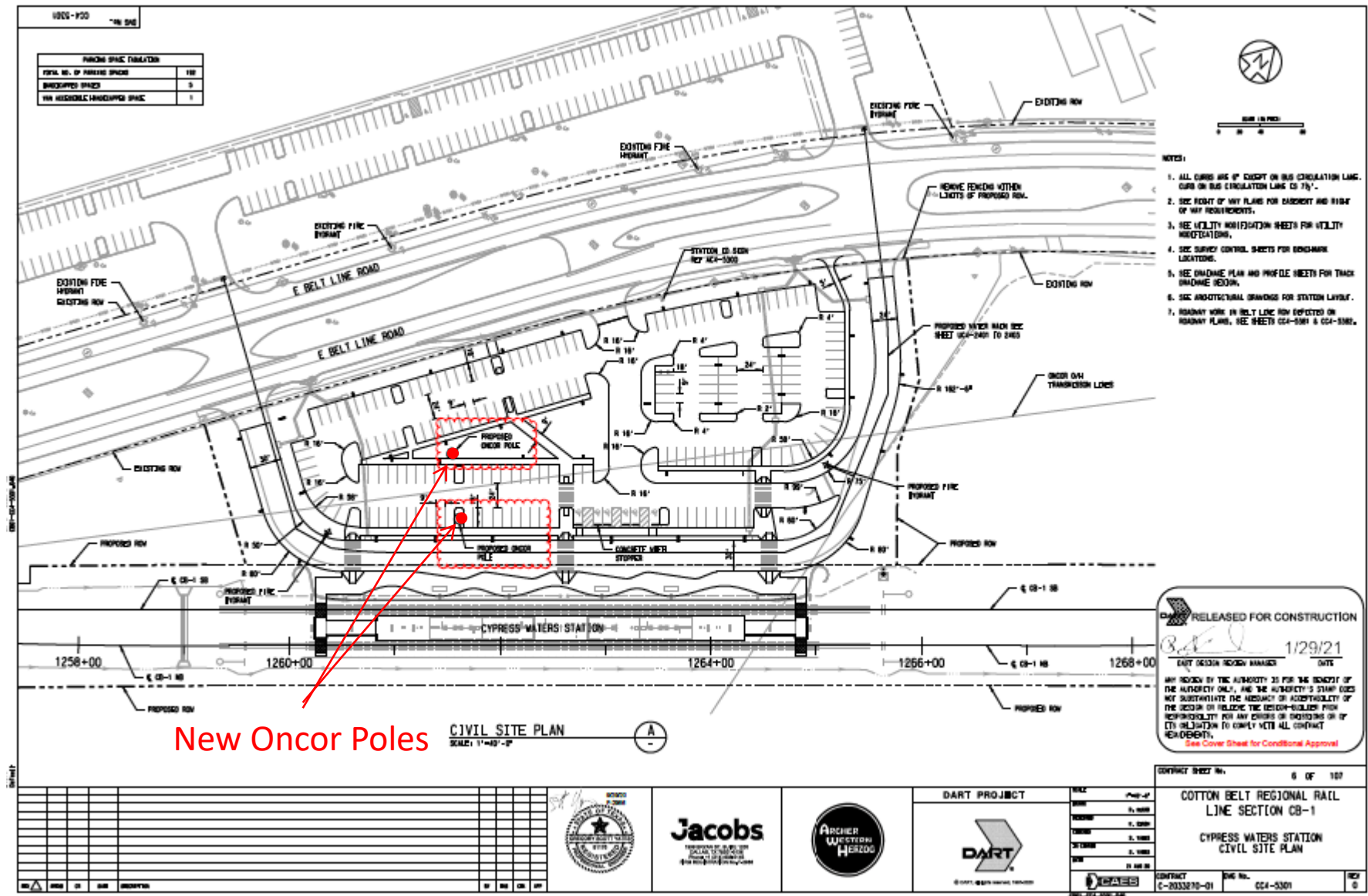
Attachment 4

B3. Elimination of Oncor Tower Relocation
Exhibits

Oncor Tower Locations in Relation to Cypress Waters Station



New Oncor Pole Locations Within Cypress Water Station



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Attachment 5

B4. Addition of new at-grade crossing –
Huntington Road
Exhibit

Addition of Huntington Road Crossing

