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Rowlett City Council Passes Resolution Regarding DART

ROWLETT, TEXAS— The Rowlett City Council has unanimously approved a resolution supporting a reduction in the sales tax allocation to Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) from the current one cent to \$0.0075 cents. This decision reflects the City Council's fiduciary responsibility to Rowlett taxpayers and addresses concerns about the balance between financial contributions and services received from DART.

"This resolution is not about severing ties with DART, but about ensuring that the financial contributions made by Rowlett are justified by the level of service we receive," said Mayor Blake Margolis. "Since 1983, Rowlett taxpayers have contributed over \$138 million to DART. This currently includes more than \$10 million annually. DART's reliance on sales tax revenue has continued to grow, now exceeding 76% of their total revenue."

With this more than \$10 million per year, Rowlett is projected to subsidize each passenger boarding at the Downtown Rowlett Station or utilizing GoLink in Rowlett by up to \$29.50, based on projected ridership. Even with the 25% reduction in sales tax contributions, Rowlett would continue to subsidize each passenger by up to \$22.

Insights from the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) 2023 Public Transportation Fact Book highlight the broader context of this decision:

1. The Dallas-Fort Worth area is the 5th largest metroplex in the country.
2. DART ranks 20th among the largest transit agencies by passenger trips.
3. Among the 50 urbanized areas with the most transit travel, DART is 17th, trailing behind cities like Portland, Seattle, and Denver, which have half the population of DFW.
4. DART does not rank within the top 50 urbanized areas by passenger trips per capita.

Mayor Margolis continued, "We recognize the importance of public transportation and DART's role in our community," Mayor Margolis continued. "However, with ridership still approximately 30% below pre-pandemic levels and sales and use tax revenues increasing by 35% over the last five years, it is crucial to encourage DART to operate more efficiently. Only 2.6% of DART's total revenue comes from fares, highlighting the need for improved fare enforcement and operational efficiency. This resolution, while symbolic, is an important first step in a multi-step process that we hope will produce the results desired."

About Rowlett, Texas

The City of Rowlett is located on the shores of Lake Ray Hubbard, 20 minutes east of Dallas, and is easily accessible from IH 30, the President George Bush Turnpike and the DART light rail. Home to over 68,000 residents, Rowlett offers award-winning schools, unique shopping opportunities, diverse housing opportunities, top-quality health care, an outstanding regional hospital, beautiful lakeside parks, and a wide variety of community, entertainment, and special events. Visit Rowlett.com for more information.

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