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## **HIGHLAND PARK TOWN COUNCIL TO CONSIDER ORDINANCE CALLING A SPECIAL ELECTION ON DART MEMBERSHIP**

**HIGHLAND PARK, TX, October 29, 2025** – At its upcoming meeting on Tuesday, November 4, 2025, the Highland Park Town Council will consider an ordinance calling a Special Election on May 2, 2026, to allow residents to decide whether the Town should continue its membership in the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) system.

The Town has been a member of DART since 1983 and dedicates one percent of its local sales tax to the transit agency. Over the past four decades, the Town has contributed more than \$107 million to DART, including over \$8 million annually in recent years. Despite this longstanding contribution, Highland Park currently receives minimal direct transit service, with no light rail operations within its boundaries and only a single bus route along Preston Road.

An independent analysis found that in 2023, Highland Park contributed approximately \$6.3 million to DART, while approximately \$1.9 million was expended within the Town, primarily to operate the Preston Road bus route, which averages just 60 riders per day. The Town's annual contribution, while minimal compared to the overall DART budget of \$1.7 billion, constitutes a significant fiscal outlay for a municipality of just 2.2 square miles, particularly as Highland Park continues to address the maintenance and modernization of a century-old public infrastructure system.

The Town continues to take issue with DART's current governance structure. Highland Park shares a single DART Board representative with three other member cities, two of which have light rail service. The lack of representation and differing priorities limit the Town's ability to advocate for its specific mobility needs, highlighting the need for governance reform.

Like all Texas municipalities, the Town is further constrained by state-imposed property tax revenue caps under Senate Bill 2 (2019), which limits most local governments to 3.5% annual property tax revenue growth without voter approval. Because 1% of the Town's local sales tax is dedicated to DART, officials have noted that this structure places Highland Park at a distinct fiscal disadvantage and increases pressure on its ability to fund essential services and maintain its aging infrastructure system.

Should the Town Council call the election, Highland Park voters would have the opportunity to determine whether to remain in DART under the current structure or pursue a different path. Regardless of the outcome, the Town intends to continue working with DART on transportation solutions and future projects that benefit both the Town and the region, while also noting that the current financial and governance model is not sustainable or fiscally feasible for Highland Park.

Founded in 1913, Highland Park is a premier residential community committed to exceptional public services, fiscal stewardship, and a high quality of life for its residents.