

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 3438
By: Hodge
Land & Resource Management
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The City of Dallas is currently heavily involved in its highly visible and ambitious \$2 billion Trinity River Corridor Project. Working with a myriad of partners, which include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Texas Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, Dallas County, and the North Texas Tollway Authority, the city is using the project to improve flood protection, reduce traffic congestion, encourage well-designed urban forms, enhance economic development, and provide unparalleled environmental and recreational opportunities for the citizens of its increasingly diverse city center. It is the largest public works project ever undertaken by the city, and is destined to become one of the largest urban parks in America.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice's (TDCJ) Dawson State Jail Facility is located in immediate proximity to the planned Downtown (Reunion) Overlook, the single most important link between the central business district and convention center and the Trinity. The Downtown Overlook area will have unparalleled views of the two planned world-class Santiago Calatrava bridges and the two lakes, which are the centerpiece of the entire Trinity Lakes design. Dallas is quite literally in the process of converting a long established "back alley" environment to a future "front yard" condition. The continued existence of the Dawson facility in the middle of the envisioned front yard is causing serious problems for the urban designers.

H.B. 3438 authorizes the Texas Board of Criminal Justice to enter into negotiations with the City of Dallas to arrange for a comparable property exchange so that Dallas can gain control of the facility and convert it to a use visually and functionally compatible with the remainder of the planned Downtown Overlook and Grand Trinity Plaza nearby.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 3438 authorizes the Texas Board of Criminal Justice to convey certain real property to the City of Dallas if the City of Dallas conveys to the board real property that is not more than 20 miles from the property line of the real property described in the bill, and on which there is a facility the board determines is comparable to the Dawson State Jail Facility located on the described property. The bill requires the General Land Office to negotiate and close the transaction between the board and the City of Dallas on behalf of the board. The bill describes the property to be conveyed to the City of Dallas by the Texas Board of Criminal Justice. The bill provides that certain requirements relating to real estate transactions authorized by the legislature and notice of sale or exchange of land by political subdivisions do not apply in this situation.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the act does not receive the necessary vote, the act takes effect September 1, 2009.