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## Voters OK sales tax for rail service

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GRAPEVINE -- The proposed Cotton Belt commuter rail line appeared to have strong voter support Tuesday in the city.

And a proposed crime control and prevention district also looked like it was headed for victory.

Voters were asked to consider two 1/2-cent sales tax increases: one for economic development and the other for the crime control district.

Early results showed that Proposition 1, the economic development sales tax, which was largely about bringing commuter rail to Grapevine, was supported by 74.2 percent of the voters, according to results from early voting ballots and three out of 16 precincts. Proposition 2, the crime control district referendum, was supported by 73.8 percent of the voters, according to unofficial results.

Dick Ruddell, the Fort Worth Transportation Authority's executive director, was confident Proposition 1 would pass when the final returns come in.

"We are very excited. It is a great start for public transportation in Tarrant County," Ruddell said. "The residents of Grapevine have shown the direction here that we ought to be going."

The tax will be divided so that 3/8 of a cent will go to the development of the planned Cotton Belt rail line from southwest Fort Worth through downtown Fort Worth and Northeast Tarrant County to Dallas/Fort Worth Airport. The remaining 1/8 of a cent will go for transit-related projects, such as a downtown station and parking garage for those using the train.

The crime control district will help fund the city's Police Department so that money once used for law enforcement can be shifted to other city needs, such as public works projects, a salary increase for city employees and to boost city reserves, which were depleted by tough economic times after 9-11.

The city's sales tax rate is likely to increase from 7.25 percent to 8.25 percent on taxable purchases effective April 1. Each tax will generate an estimated \$10 million next fiscal year.

A residents group, Citizens for a Better Grapevine, was formed to campaign for the propositions, raising nearly \$10,000.

The largest donor, according to a report filed Oct. 30, was the Gaylord Texan Resort and Conference Center on Lake Grapevine, which gave \$5,000.

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