

Star-Telegram

Riding rails at very high speed

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A Japanese-backed company, Texas Central High Speed Railway Llc., wants a high-speed rail line between southeast Dallas and Houston.

A local group, Texas High Speed Rail & Transportation Corp., wants a high-speed rail line to Houston with its northern end at Dallas/Fort Worth Airport.

The southeast Dallas line would be cheaper. The DFW route would serve western areas better.

Which way will it go?

Immediate need

Why is it so difficult to see the obvious? The Golden Triangle of highways has already been built between Houston, Dallas, Austin and San Antonio. Now the question is where to put the stations.

Take a look around the world at the systems already in place. They run airport-to-airport .

Europe has been doing it for years between large city pairs. It's called the IC, Intercity!

Let's don't make it so difficult to figure out. The highway system is sitting there: Interstates 45/35/20/10 with lots of space in between for construction. Who needs eminent domain?

— Don Pittman, Arlington

Conventional rail

The question is not, "Where should the terminal go?" but, "Where do we as a community want (or not want) development?"

We have learned from Mockingbird Station in Dallas that, if there is quality transportation, a station will flourish. People getting on and off the trains provide the demand for goods and services.

If the results are a given, then I disagree with the perceived need for high-speed train service. It is one hour gate-to-gate for a flight from Dallas to Houston. It is two hours from airport parking lot to airport parking lot.

The competition is not the flight; it is the overall time from origin to destination. That is why I prefer conventional rail, where one can develop multiple urban and suburban stations with relatively low investment, leading to more overall development in the DFW Metroplex.

— Kal Silverberg, Fort Worth

Move on Dallas-Houston

I think the proposed high-speed rail should go directly into Dallas Union Station.

It does not seem to me that someone going from Houston would want to go directly to DFW. Houston already has a big international airport with flights that go to the same places flights from DFW would go.

Union Station would be the ideal terminus with a direct link to DFW. I think most people going to the Dallas area on high-speed rail would be planning to go to the city of Dallas.

I remember how in Japan the famous Tokaido train goes into Tokyo but not to Tokyo Narita airport. As it is, there is excellent rail service from Tokyo to Narita. That is the same in cities in Europe.

I believe we should first start with conventional passenger service from Houston to Dallas while we are waiting on the high-speed rail. There is not passenger service from Houston to Dallas. That should be addressed right away.

— John McKenzie, Kingsville

Just do it

At this point, I don't care who puts it in, as long as it's done, and that's hard for a Texan to say.

Always think about it on the long, boring drive from Fort Worth to Austin and beyond on Interstate 35, which is always under construction at some point. Have read dribs and drabs about it forever. Seems like politics as usual getting in the way.

If any one of the key people making the decision were to get stuck in one of the bottlenecks or had to travel that road very many times, it would have been done long ago.

— Tamie Mayfield, Blue Mound

Travelers' needs

The rail planners should look at where the travelers are located, or more importantly, how they can efficiently get to and from the rail station. It should be abundantly clear that the most effective location would take into account the bulk of the area's population and provide ancillary services such as rental cars.

Anyone looking to address these factors should recognize that co-locating the rail terminus with DFW Airport not only addresses these factors, but also provides for convenient interconnect for those travelers who are going onward — from either plane or train.

By setting up DFW Airport as the nexus for long-distance rail, we should also address the linkage to regional and metro rail services. A stub rail link should be run from the TRE's Centreport station to D/FW to allow travelers to reach both Dallas and Fort Worth by rail.

The planned linkage from the airport to the north via Grapevine and DART's link via Irving also help interconnect the metro area via D/FW.

Eventually rail will grow — if the travelers' needs are put in focus.

— Dwight Smith, Grapevine

Southeast Dallas

In my opinion, the Japanese-backed company's plan makes more sense having the rail line end in southeast Dallas as opposed to the local group wanting it to end at DFW Airport.

Texas 360, 183 and 121 are already crowded. Also, airport parking is not cheap. Irving is close to or already built out, so the additional cost to go north from southeast Dallas to Irving would not be worth it.

The train would be between Dallas and Houston, not the mid-cities and Houston. Southeast Dallas already has ample available land that can be acquired cheaper than building rail all the way to Irving. Besides it would be relatively easy for DART to connect the high-speed rail station to their existing line.

A person could get to downtown Dallas, DFW or Fort Worth by using DART and the T.

— Wayne Cobb, Mansfield

Creative options

Let's talk dollars and sense. The final few miles from southeast Dallas to Dallas Union Station don't need to be at 200 miles per hour.

If you build parallel to existing right of way at 90-110 mph, it costs less going into the city proper. How do you think they do the final few miles in other countries?

Then use the TRE, which currently runs at 79 mph and upgrade it to 90-110 mph with a stop at DFW/Centreport and on to Fort Worth. The "final few miles" into Dallas and the TRE upgrades should either be a public-private partnership or built as a public benefit. Then, between those fast intercity trains, you now have additional track time for more "higher-speed" regional trains between Fort Worth and Dallas to attract even more riders.

You could even build a spur track into the airport from the DFW/Centreport stop and do a quick reverse move. Let's think outside the box.

— Peter LeCody, Dallas,

Texas Rail Advocates

Government "prompting"

If it's truly private money, they can build it from Ennis to Conroe, or from Kilgore to Uvalde if they want to waste their own money. However, I doubt the money will be entirely private; business always seems to demand some level of public "partnership" nowadays, and the railroads specifically have depended on government assistance since they began.

Also, it's not like we actually live in a free country; if government wants to make someone do something, they find a way. If there's to be

only one terminal, it clearly belongs at DFW Airport. I predict that the government will apply its usual combination of sticks and carrots to get it there.

— George Michael Sherry, Fort Worth

No to rail

Which way will it go? Hopefully, neither. Can you spell B-O-O-N-D-O-G-G-L-E?

In the last 50 years, every rail project, except for the Eastern corridor (Washington to Boston), whether intra- or inter-city has been based on “conservative estimates” of X riders, to be built in Y years, costing Z dollars. The real numbers end up as $X/20$, $3 \times Y$, and $10 \times Z$.

The builders, who promise the project would be built with private money, will somehow end up using eminent domain to legally steal the property of tens of thousands of Texans who live in right-of-way, some families for over 100 years. When the predicted profits inevitably fail to materialize, the group will manage to stick the taxpayers of Texas with a bill so they get the profit to which they feel entitled.

— Stanley Poynor, Mansfield

Greatest benefit

Since it appears that only private businesses are involved, then it seems to be a business decision. Even though each city would opt for the one benefiting its local citizenry, the direction selected will probably stem from the most efficient profit/cost analysis.

If it comes down to wannabees, we need not forget that what is the best for the majority is best for the individual. Thus, the line that benefits the most people should prove to be the most productive from a profit standpoint and serve more people. Growth to both cities seems preferable because it should promote more prosperity for all.

— Grady Fuller, Kennedale

Keep airport central

In planning, keep in mind that DFW Airport is one of the busiest in the U.S. People travel to and from the airport in every direction. Is there one direction that is or will be traveled more than other directions?

DFW Airport should be dominant in any plan! It will be here a long time with increasing usage.

— George J. Anthony, Fort Worth

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