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## Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth Mayors Back Bullet Train

by [Aman Batheja](#) | March 27, 2014 | [1 Comment](#)



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photo by: Norihiro Kataoka

The JR Central N700 Series, a Japanese Shinkansen bullet train developed by two railway companies in Japan.

The mayors of Houston, Dallas and Fort Worth announced Thursday their unified support for the construction of a privately funded bullet train between the two

metropolitan regions.

“If successful, Houstonians will have a reliable, private alternative that will help alleviate traffic congestion and drastically reduce travel times,” Houston Mayor Annise Parker said at a press conference at Houston City Hall.

Texas Central Railway announced in 2012 its plans to build a 200 mph rail line that would transport passengers between Dallas and Houston within 90 minutes. The company has said it will not require any public subsidies to fund the multi-billion

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#### Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth Mayors Back Bullet Train

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dollar project, which it is developing in partnership with a Japanese firm, Central Japan Railway.

The mayors praised the project and predicted it would aid the state economically and environmentally by reducing the number of people traveling by car.

“Not only will high-speed rail significantly reduce travel times and traffic congestion for Dallas and Houston area residents, but it will also create new, high-paying jobs and stimulate economic growth,” Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings said.

The endorsements come as the Federal Railroad Commission is “30 to 60 days” away from formally launching an environmental impact study of the project, said Robert Eckels, a former Harris County judge and president of Texas Central Railway. The study, which will be funded by Texas Central Railway, is a critical step on the project's path to drawing approval from federal regulators.

A separate federal environmental impact study examining a proposed rail line between Fort Worth and Dallas and connecting with Central Texas Railway’s project is expected to begin at the same time, said Tom Schieffer, a former U.S. ambassador to Japan and a senior adviser to the company. Also Thursday, the Texas Transportation Commission appointed several members to a new Commission for High-Speed Rail in the Dallas/Fort Worth Region to advise the agency on that project.

“Thanks to the leadership of our friends at Texas Central Railway, my fellow mayors, and our state and federal partners, we have a remarkable opportunity to change the way we travel and connect our cities,” Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price said.

The [last major effort](#) by a private firm to build a high-speed rail line between Dallas and Houston was more than 20 years ago. At the time, Mayors Kathryn Whitmire of Houston, Annette Straus of Dallas and Bob Bolen of Fort Worth all supported the plan, which was expected to eventually connect to Fort Worth, San Antonio and Austin as well. But officials from many rural communities on the train’s route publicly opposed that project. The endeavor eventually collapsed because the company failed to secure enough private financing.

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