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Vision for Dallas-to-Fort Worth bullet train to be unveiled

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Transportation Writer

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State transportation officials this week are unveiling early plans for a high-speed train line from Dallas to Fort Worth. Like Dallas Area Rapid Transit's plans to expand transit service in downtown, the project is an attempt to take advantage of plans for a high-speed rail line from Dallas to Houston.

The Texas Department of Transportation for years has looked at possible high-speed rail lines across the state. None of those lines, including the Dallas-to-Fort Worth one, have funding. But officials have studied the possibilities and potential routes, which ideally would connect the state's biggest cities and could eventually run from South Texas to Oklahoma City.

"These projects are part of a larger statewide network," said Erik Steavens, TxDOT's rail director. "You obviously want to see the network built out in a manner where it can be built out logically."

The state agency is conducting three meetings across North Texas this week to present where the current plans stand and to gather public comments. TxDOT is looking at running the Dallas-Fort Worth line alongside either the TRE commuter line that already connects the two cities or Interstate 30.

"We're carrying forward two options to start the conversation, but there may be more options that come out of the process," Steavens said last week at a North Central Texas Council of Governments committee meeting.

The route and funding aren't all the state has to figure out. There's also the question of what type of train will run on the track. The state could have its own trains, or it could pay the Texas Central Railway to run its trains on TxDOT tracks so passengers from Houston could have a one-seat trip to Fort Worth.

Another key decision is picking and securing a station on the Dallas end of the line. The state wants to tie the line into a private developer's planned line to Houston.

"It should be something where we have those tied together," Steavens said.

Dallas station site

But Texas Central has yet to identify where its Dallas station will be.

That entity is looking at three different spots, one in downtown Dallas and two farther south along Interstate 45. But Dallas officials and the company both prefer a downtown Dallas terminus.

"As a general matter of practice, we're focused on a downtown Dallas station," said Travis Kelly, Texas Central's vice president of government relations.

That company hasn't identified a specific piece of land, though. Kelly says it's looking at five different parcels. Being able to accommodate a state-developed line running west to Fort Worth will be a factor in its choice, Kelly said. The company is also considering creating a transit-oriented development near its station, he said.

Focus on route

For now, TxDOT is focused on the route itself. It's also considering an Arlington station along the line.

But specific station locations aren't yet on the agency's front burner. Not that officials won't take ideas at this week's meeting. Once specific location possibilities are identified, they'll take the plans back out to the public.

"We'll have a separate round of public meetings related to stations," Steavens said.

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26 Comments

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t e S



bigTex


12 days ago

Makes no sense. Highspeed Rail shouldn't have stations that close. Defeats the whole purpose. Which I'm starting to think is the plan anyway.


Repl

1 C


y Share

 **Craig** 14 days ago
 A great idea and really needed. It would keep Texas as the forward thinking business capital of America. The DART has grown. The DFW stop is extremely convenient to use now as well.


Repl 1 C
 y Share

 **whartonWi ser** 14 days ago
 Bad Idea, as proposed, or presupposed. Something is needed for all but all of the same thing is a deal killer. Wonder who that benefits?


Repl Shar 1 1 2
 y e reply

 **Ken Duble** 14 days ago
 Once there's established service between Dallas and Houston, extensions to Fort Worth and Galveston would make sense, even if they're less than 205 mph.


Repl 3 C
 y Share

 **Biff Loeder** 14 days ago
 A bullet train that goes thirty Miles?
 That's just stupid!


Repl Shar 3 2 C
 y e replies

 **Ken Duble** 14 days ago
 It's true nobody would ride it between Dallas and Fort Worth, but the question is whether there is a market between Fort Worth and Houston, or Fort Worth and Galveston.

Repl 2 C
 y Share

 **Craig** 14 days ago
 The point of the Dallas to Ft Worth connection is to tie in DFW as one area as the line expand south to Houston and north to Oklahoma. Inevitably Austin and San Antonio would be next.

Repl Shar 1 0 C
 y e reply

 **Ken Duble** 13 days ago
 I would envision HSR from Dallas to OKC passing through DFW rather than FW. Service to FW would more likely be bound for Albuquerque and all points west.

http://res.dallasnews.com/interactives/2014_January/highspeedrail/

As for the I-35 corridor, there are reasons the Texas Central HSR guys passed it over. The fact the area is so densely populated actually counts against it as a starter line for HSR. Keep in mind, HSR's competition is as much aviation as the automobile. The I-35 corridor is more similar to the Tampa-Orlando-Miami corridor that took a pass on 179-mph service a couple of years back, and foolishly, I might add. I'd see this corridor as a better argument for higher-speed service rather than HSR. It already has Amtrak, and TX Dot has a sensible vision for incremental improvements. The problem is, TX Dot has no money, so it's as much about the type of politicians we send to Austin as anything.

0 C

Reply Share



mart ha

14 days ago

Since this is being billed as a 'high speed' train, couldn't riders get off in Dallas and catch the TRE to DFW and then take some sort of rider service to Arlington? Seems Arlington has never been on broad with any type of 'public transportation' this would make sense and not turn a high speed train into making 'milk stops'. I hope this can get going. The US needs high speed trains, maybe not a lot but at least a few going cross country.

Reply Share 1

0 1



Ken Duble

14 days ago

This would not be high-speed service, in the 205 mph sense. Rather, it would be higher-speed service, in the sense it would be exceeding 79 mph.

Reply Share

2 0



VaBo gu

14 days ago

The Southwest Airline people are laughing at this! There is no way the train can compete for the price/speed of air travel. I would rather finish 3 lanes of highway on I 45 vs spend the ridiculous amount of \$\$ on the toy train! What a stupid idea!

Reply Share 2

3 1 0



hockjeyinveins.

14 days ago

Really ? So Dallas to Houston for 50.00 on a bullet train wouldn't interest you ? I would chose that over the hassles if flying in a heart beat -no crazy security lines -can be picked up right at the station (instead of baggage claim a quarter mile away) & I know the seats are gonna be bigger !!!

Reply Share

3 0



Ken Duble

14 days ago

These venture capitalists are wealthy guys. They didn't get that way by making bad calls. There's a business market between the two downtowns, Dallas and Houston, and it could be served better by a 205 mph train from Union to downtown Houston than by spending 20 minutes getting to an airport an hour early for check-in, then another 20 minutes getting from the airport to the destination. And this assumes all bags are carry-on. You'd have to add yet another 20 minutes for checked bags.

Reply Share

2 0



Wylie H Dallas

14 days ago

Why is the North Texas High Speed Rail Commission controlled by representatives of Tarrant County?

Reply Share 1

1 3 1



Ken Duble

14 days ago

A former ambassador to Japan is from Fort Worth. He saw the potential while serving his post.

Reply Share

1 0



1Dal M

14 days ago

I'm fine with it, so long as I'm not asked to pay for it. Let Tarrant County pay for it.

Repl y Share 4 2



Gregg Welpe

14 days ago

Where is the demand for this service or is this just another speculator's dream? The TRE is adequate enough if we want to get to Ft. Worth to visit, SMDH....

Repl Shar y e reply 1 7 1



Ken Duble

14 days ago

The demand wouldn't be between Fort Worth and Dallas. Rather, it would be Houstonians doing business in Fort Worth, or doing a leisure weekend at the Stockyards, and it would be Fort Worth people going to Galveston for a cruise, even if excursion coaches for Galveston were waiting at the station in Houston. Furthermore, a HSR rail to Galveston could move at a fast clip crossing Galveston Bay, even over an existing freight causeway.

Repl y Share 1 C



Wylie H Dallas

14 days ago

I've never heard of a bullet train route that is only 30 miles long being built as anything other than a money-losing demo project. It doesn't seem practical. Why not just run a conventional express train on improved tracks?

Repl Shar y e reply 1 1 2



Ken Duble

14 days ago

"These projects are part of a larger statewide network," said Erik Steavens, TxDOT's rail director. "You obviously want to see the network built out in a manner where it can be built out logically."

"The state could have its own trains, or it could pay the Texas Central Railway to run its trains on TxDOT tracks so passengers from Houston could have a one-seat trip to Fort Worth."

Wylie, what you're saying is true, but you have to see the bigger picture. If we get HSR going between Houston and Dallas, then it would add value to the system to extend it to places like Galveston (cruise lines) and Fort Worth. The trains wouldn't necessarily travel at 205 mph to these places. Yet, once you get past Fort Worth, the rail ROW exists to open it up to 205 mph on the way to Albuquerque or Denver. If that's the ultimate plan, then an extension to Fort Worth makes sense.

Repl y Share 1 C



1Dal M

14 days ago

Free consulting advice: just run an express TRE train. Save the tax payers \$1 Billion.

Repl Shar y e replies 5 1 2



NyYank ee

14 days ago

What are you thinking? Not enough "influential" people would make money for unnecessary construction. Plus there can't be any "free" consulting - they have to hire an consulting firm for six/seven figures to work on this for about a year or so.

Repl 4 C
y Share



NyYank ee

14 days ago

Seriously, also believe most bullet trains - depending on the train system - use special track to maximize the high speed aspect - which is what would be desired to reduce travel time.

Repl 1 C
y Share



Ken Duble

14 days ago

That's one of the paths under consideration. The problem is the biggest draws in term of venues are along I-30. But, even if they used the TRE right-of-way, eliminating stops wouldn't save much time. They'd have to actually run the train in excess of 79 mph, and that would involve all new, separate tracks that aren't shared by freight. So, since we're talking new tracking anyway, there's nothing wrong with considering right-of-way closer to I-30.

Repl Shar 2 2 C
y e replies



1Dal M

14 days ago

Ken, an express TRE would be very different than the "one seat" plan Tarrant County's NCTCOG wants. A transfer in downtown Dallas would promote the jobs here rather than transferring them to Tarrant County. If they have to get off the train to transfer they will spend money here. Get a coffee, or something. Otherwise we are nothing more than a brief stop for them.

Repl Shar 1 0 C
y e reply



Ken Duble

13 days ago

I envision Dallas as a hub rather than a stop. But, I agree with what you're saying in the sense that extending HSR to FW wouldn't make a lot of sense UNLESS the goal is to eventually extend it farther west to Albuquerque and beyond. Albuquerque now has a TRE-type service to Santa Fe. Here's the vision:

http://res.dallasnews.com/interactives/2014_January/highspeedrail/

Repl 0 C
y Share