



Dallas-Fort Worth Core Express Service

Scoping Summary Report

Final

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Federal Railroad Administration and
Texas Department of Transportation

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Table of Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Project Overview.....	1
1.1.1	Project Purpose and Need	1
1.1.2	Environmental Study and Agency Roles	1
1.1.3	Potential Corridors, Stations and Design.....	2
1.1.4	Project Study Area.....	2
1.2	Purpose of this Report	3
1.3	NEPA and the Scoping Process.....	4
1.4	Public Outreach and Notification Process	5
1.4.1	Outreach to Environmental Justice and Limited-English Proficient Stakeholders.....	6
1.5	Ongoing Public Involvement.....	7
2.0	PUBLIC SCOPING PROCESS AND COMMENTS.....	8
2.1	Public Scoping Process Overview	8
2.2	Participation by Public Officials.....	8
2.3	Public Scoping Comments - Major Themes	10
2.4	Public Comments by Environmental Categories.....	10
2.4.1	Potential Corridors and Station Locations	11
2.4.2	Proposed Draft Purpose and Need	13
2.4.3	Environmental Issues and Concerns	14
2.4.4	Stakeholder Questions.....	14
2.5	TxDOT Responses to Public Scoping Comments.....	14
2.6	TxDOT Responses to Public Scoping Comments	16
3.0	AGENCY SCOPING PROCESS AND COMMENTS	19
3.1	Agency Scoping Process Overview.....	19
3.2	Cooperating Agencies	20
3.3	Agency Scoping Summary – Major Themes	20
4.0	NEXT STEPS IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS	22





List of Figures

Figure 1-1: Potential Alternatives as Defined in TOPRS Study	3
Figure 1-2: Environmental Review Process	4
Figure 2-1: Public Comments by Environmental Category	11
Figure 2-2: Station Location Preferences	12

List of Tables

Table 2-1: Public Scoping Meetings Details	8
Table 2-2: Scoping Participants - Elected Officials	9
Table 2-3: Public Scoping Responses to Comments by Environmental Category	15
Table 3-1: Agency Scoping Meeting Participants.....	19
Table 4-1: Project Schedule	22





1.0 Introduction

1.1 *Project Overview*

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is working with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to study a possible high-performance, intercity passenger rail service between Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas. The 30-mile, Dallas-Fort Worth Core Express Service (Project) will evaluate the potential for a high-speed rail connector, linking other potential high- and higher-speed passenger rail projects in Texas.

In addition to providing faster, limited-stop trains for people traveling between Dallas and Fort Worth, the Project could provide a critical link between projects including:

- The proposed 240-mile Dallas to Houston High-Speed Rail Project, which would terminate in Dallas; and,
- The Texas-Oklahoma Passenger Rail Study (TOPRS), which evaluates a range of possible conventional, higher-speed and high-speed service alternatives that could span 850 miles from Oklahoma City to South Texas, through the Dallas-Fort Worth (D-FW) Metroplex.

1.1.1 *Project Purpose and Need*

The purpose of the Project is to study the feasibility of a financially viable, safe, reliable, and environmentally sustainable intercity passenger rail service connecting Dallas and Fort Worth that could provide a key link between existing and potential Texas high-performance passenger rail systems. This service could offer a convenient alternative to driving and enhance transportation alternatives for travel to and from the D-FW Metroplex.

By the year 2035, the Dallas-Fort Worth region is forecasted to grow from 6.5 million to 9.8 million residents, an increase of more than 50 percent. This rapid growth will increase traffic congestion and reduce air quality. A reliable option is needed in the Metroplex that could provide an alternative to driving between major cities in Texas and surrounding states, while also improving local mobility.

1.1.2 *Environmental Study and Agency Roles*

The Project is being evaluated through a project-level Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), initiated in 2014, under a grant issued to TxDOT by FRA on behalf of the United States Department of Transportation. The EIS is being prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.) and the preparation is



being managed by TxDOT. FRA is the lead federal agency providing oversight and responsibility for the final decision on Project implementation.

The EIS will evaluate the environmental implications of various route and operation alternatives for high-performance passenger rail in an area served by Amtrak's limited, long-distance Texas Eagle and the local-serving Trinity River Express (TRE) commuter rail service. The EIS builds upon the TOPRS program-level EIS, focusing only on the segment between Dallas and Fort Worth.

1.1.3 Potential Corridors, Stations and Design

The final alignment has not been determined, but it is anticipated that the rail service could use an existing transportation corridor or existing linear infrastructure, such as railroads, roads, and utilities. The EIS will evaluate potential corridors, as well as a "no build" alternative.

Although there has been regional discussion about station concepts serving downtown Dallas, Arlington and downtown Fort Worth, specific station locations have not yet been determined. TxDOT supports the study of the three station approach outlined in adopted regional transportation plans. The Project will determine opportunity zones for future station sites and test station configurations. Specific locations would be determined as part of regionally-led implementation efforts that may follow after the EIS is complete.

While the service technology will be steel wheel on steel rail, the type of train equipment and speeds are not yet known. The EIS will evaluate a range of potential train types and speeds, their respective benefits, and potential community and environmental impacts.

The results of the EIS will inform and support FRA's decision on train types and speeds, route alignment, rail service station location, operational configuration and other project details.

1.1.4 Project Study Area

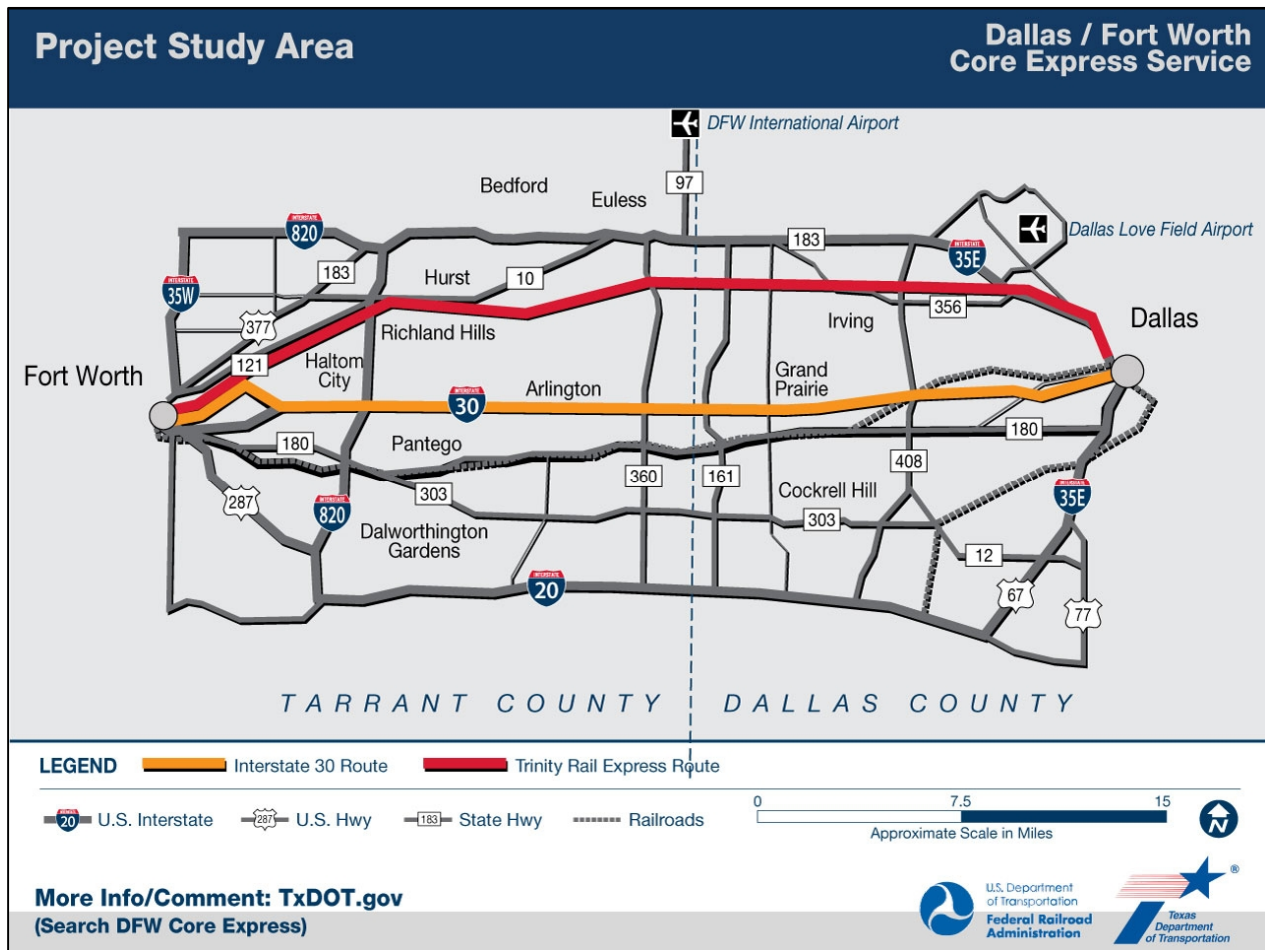
Figure 1-1 shows the Project study area and the two Project corridors, or "Build Alternatives," recommended in the program-level TOPRS for further study: Trinity Rail Express (TRE) Commuter Rail corridor and the Interstate Highway 30 (I-30) corridor.

These Build Alternatives were shared during the public scoping process. Stakeholders were encouraged to comment on these two corridors and suggest additional Build Alternatives for consideration.



The preferred alternative for the Project will be determined by the FRA, in coordination with TxDOT, as a result of the EIS process, including the possibility that the outcome could be the “no-build” alternative.

Figure 1-1: Potential Alternatives as Defined in TOPRS Study



1.2 Purpose of this Report

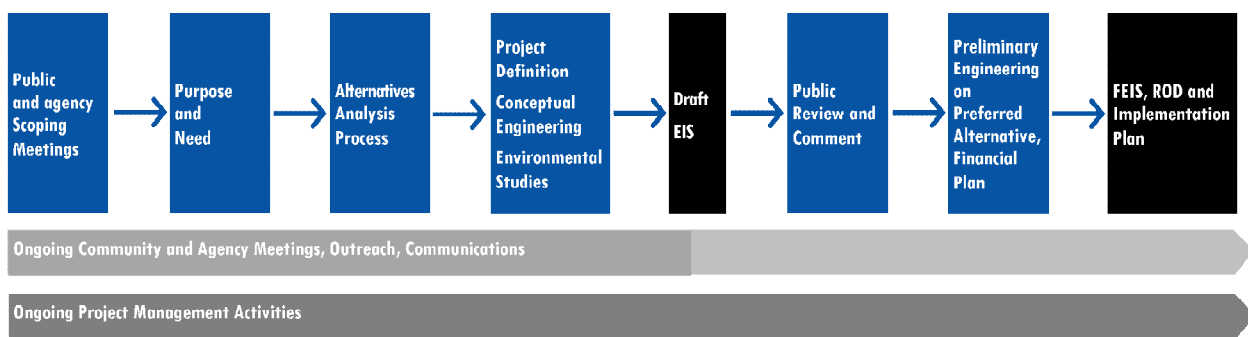
This Scoping Summary Report provides a summary of the process used and comments received during the four-month public scoping period in late 2014. An explanation of the scoping process, including a summary of comments provided by members of the public, regulatory agencies, local governments, and other stakeholders, are provided in later sections of this report.



1.3 NEPA and the Scoping Process

The environmental review process is governed by NEPA and includes the public scoping, development of the Purpose and Need Statement, analysis of alternatives, identification of environmental consequences of these alternatives, and proposes mitigation measures. The NEPA process also includes agency and stakeholder involvement, publication of a Draft EIS and a Final EIS, and issuance of a final Record of Decision (ROD) by FRA. **Figure 1-2** summarizes the EIS process for the Project, which is expected to conclude in 2017.

Figure 1-2: Environmental Review Process



The first step in the development of the EIS is the “scoping” process. Scoping enables people, agencies and other interested parties to learn about and help shape the Project. Input received is used to refine and further develop the Purpose and Need Statement, which is used to identify a range of reasonable alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS.

Scoping is not conducted to resolve differences concerning the merits of a project or to anticipate the ultimate decision on a project. Rather, the purpose of scoping is to help ensure that a comprehensive and focused EIS will be prepared to provide a firm basis for the decision-making process. Significant issues may be identified through public, stakeholder, and agency comments that require coordination with agencies to develop methodology to evaluate potential alternatives in the EIS.

The scoping process for the Project was carried out in accordance with NEPA over a 4-month period from September 5 through December 15, 2014. During this period, TxDOT and the FRA invited the public, stakeholders, and agencies to comment on the draft Purpose and Need statement, the Project study area, the range of alternatives to be considered, and the types of environmental issues and impacts to be evaluated in the EIS. A scoping package that provided background information on each of these topics was posted on the Project [website](http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/projects/studies/statewide/dfw-core-express.html): <http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/projects/studies/statewide/dfw-core-express.html>.





Nearly 400 people, including residents, business owners, public officials, and public agencies, participated in the Project scoping process. Approximately 350 individuals, agency representatives, and elected officials attended public scoping meetings and another 50 commented in written form or online.

1.4 Public Outreach and Notification Process

TxDOT and FRA publicized the scoping process and opportunities to comment using a variety of communications and public outreach methods as described below. The notification effort was supported by agency partners, including local cities and the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). Activities included:

- Notice of Intent published in the *Federal Register* by FRA on Sept. 5, 2014;
- Notice of Intent published in the *Texas Register* by TxDOT on Oct. 10, 2014;
- Project web pages developed by FRA and TxDOT with online comment form;
- 7,500 email invitations (three rounds of emails by TxDOT; one round of emails by NCTCOG);
- 12 newspaper display ads (eight in Environmental Justice [EJ] publications);
- Emails to local elected officials and city public information officers;
- Press release by TxDOT;
- Social media posts (Facebook and Twitter);



- Public information outreach by local cities;
- Public outreach presentations to local and regional community organizations; and,
- Outreach to EJ and Limited-English Proficient (LEP) communities within the Project study area.



1.4.1 Outreach to Environmental Justice and Limited-English Proficient Stakeholders

As defined in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) *Final Guidance for Incorporating Environmental Justice Concerns in EPA's NEPA Compliance Analyses*, EJ is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies (EPA, 1998).

Noticing for the public scoping process included outreach to stakeholders in EJ communities within the Project study area. Information about the scoping process was also made available to LEP stakeholders. Materials were translated into Spanish and offered in other languages and formats, upon request. Translators and court-reporters were on-hand at all public meetings and assisted non-English-speaking and sight-impaired stakeholders in communicating ideas about the Project.

Specifically, the Project team:

- Emailed 102 chambers of commerce, organizations, neighborhood associations, churches, libraries and senior, recreation and community centers, social service and Department of Health and Human Services agencies and organizations serving EJ populations. Emails asked recipients to forward on information about the public scoping meetings. Entities in Dallas, Grand Prairie, Arlington, Irving, and Fort Worth were included on the email list.
- Distributed an email and followed up with a telephone contact to communication officers of the cities of Dallas, Grand Prairie, Arlington, Irving, and Fort Worth. A request for assistance was made during telephone contacts to distribute the notice of scoping meetings to areas and entities serving EJ and LEP populations.
- Mailed sets of 20 flyers to 189 county commission and city council members, chambers of commerce, organizations, neighborhood associations, churches, libraries and senior, recreation and community centers, social service and Department of Health and Human Services agencies and organizations serving EJ populations. Recipients were asked to post and/or distribute the flyers and were informed that additional copies would be made available upon request.
- Provided public scoping meeting flier notifications to participants of the Oak Cliff Chamber of Commerce Transportation Forum, a special community event in southwestern Dallas held on November 14, 2014.
- Published display advertisements 14 days and seven days in advance of the public scoping meetings in *Al Día* and *La Estrella en Casa*, the Spanish newspapers in Dallas



and Fort Worth, respectively, and in *La Vida News: The Black Voice* in Fort Worth and *The Dallas Weekly* in Dallas, which both serve African-American communities. Copies of the ads and affidavits of publication appear in the Scoping Summary Appendix.

- Attended, by invitation, the West Dallas Chamber of Commerce annual meeting on December 8, 2014. Provided a public information table, informational displays, bi-lingual fact sheets, and comment forms.

The appendix contains a listing of the agencies and organizations that received mailings or email notifications of the public scoping meetings.

1.5 *Ongoing Public Involvement*

Even though scoping is a distinct stage in the EIS process, public involvement activities will continue throughout the environmental review process. Comments received through the public engagement process will continue to be considered in development of engineering and environmental studies; however, they will not be included in this Scoping Summary Report, which documents results of the process during the public scoping period from September 5 to December 15, 2014.





2.0 Public Scoping Process and Comments

2.1 *Public Scoping Process Overview*

More than 350 people attended three public scoping meetings held in November 2014. The meetings were held in Fort Worth, Arlington, and Dallas during daytime and evening hours. **Table 2-1** summarizes the details of the public scoping meetings.

The meetings included a presentation by FRA and TxDOT, an informational open house, and opportunities for public and private testimony.

Comments were received at the public scoping meetings, as well as via mail, email, and the Project website.



More than 150 people attended the public scoping in Arlington, Texas.

Table 2-1: Public Scoping Meetings Details

Fort Worth	Arlington	Dallas
Tues., Nov. 18, 2014 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.	Wed., Nov. 19, 2014 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.	Thurs., Nov. 20, 2014 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Fort Worth Intermodal Transportation Center	NCTCOG, Transportation Council Room	J. Erik Jonsson Central Library Auditorium
114 Attendees	152 Attendees	91 Attendees

2.2 *Participation by Public Officials*

A number of local, regional, state and federal elected representatives attended, submitted comments, or sent representatives to participate in the public scoping meetings. **Table 2-2** lists those officials and representatives.



Table 2-2: Scoping Participants - Elected Officials

Local Officials	State Officials	Federal Officials
Hon. Betsy Price Mayor City of Fort Worth	Susan Young District Director SD 9, Office of State Sen. Kelly Hancock	Luke Harvey Constituent Services Office of U.S. Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson
Hon. Robert Cluck Mayor City of Arlington	Devan Allen District Director HD 101, Office of State Rep. Chris Turner	
Hon. Sal Espino Councilman District 2 Mayor Pro Tem City of Fort Worth	Angel Murray District Director HD 95, Office of State Rep. Nicole Collier	
Hon. Kathryn Wilemon Councilwoman District 4 Mayor Pro Tem City of Arlington	Scott Stier District Director HD 93, Office of State Rep. Matt Krause	
Hon. Jeremy Tompkins Councilman District 2 City of Euless		
Hon. Vonciel Jones Hill Councilwoman District 3 City of Dallas		

In addition to elected officials and their representatives, a number of appointed officials participated in the public scoping meetings and provided comments, including the following members of the Texas Commission for High-Speed Rail in the D-FW region. Commission members included:

- Hon. Vonciel Jones Hill
- Jere Thompson
- Lorraine Miller
- Jeff Williams





2.3 *Public Scoping Comments - Major Themes*

TxDOT and FRA received approximately 90 written, oral, and online comments from members of the public, elected officials and local or regional government agencies during the scoping period. Additional input was received from federal, state, regional and local agencies at two agency scoping meetings held in October 2014, as described in Section 3.

Many of these comments shared common themes, suggestions or concerns. Each of the ideas, comments, and concerns expressed during the scoping period were reviewed by TxDOT and the FRA and will be used to inform the EIS. The comments are detailed in the Scoping Summary Report Appendix.

Overall, the comments from agency representatives, local elected officials, and the public were in support of the Project. Reasons for support included the opinion that the Project has the potential to transform the D-FW Metroplex and enhance the North Texas region by improving mobility, making travel more reliable, reducing highway congestion, and fostering an interconnected and multimodal transportation system across the region and statewide.

Stakeholders who expressed support for the Project highlighted additional benefits, stating including improved air quality, increased safety of travelers, regional economic growth opportunities, avoidance of conflicts with freight movement, and a faster alternative to driving.

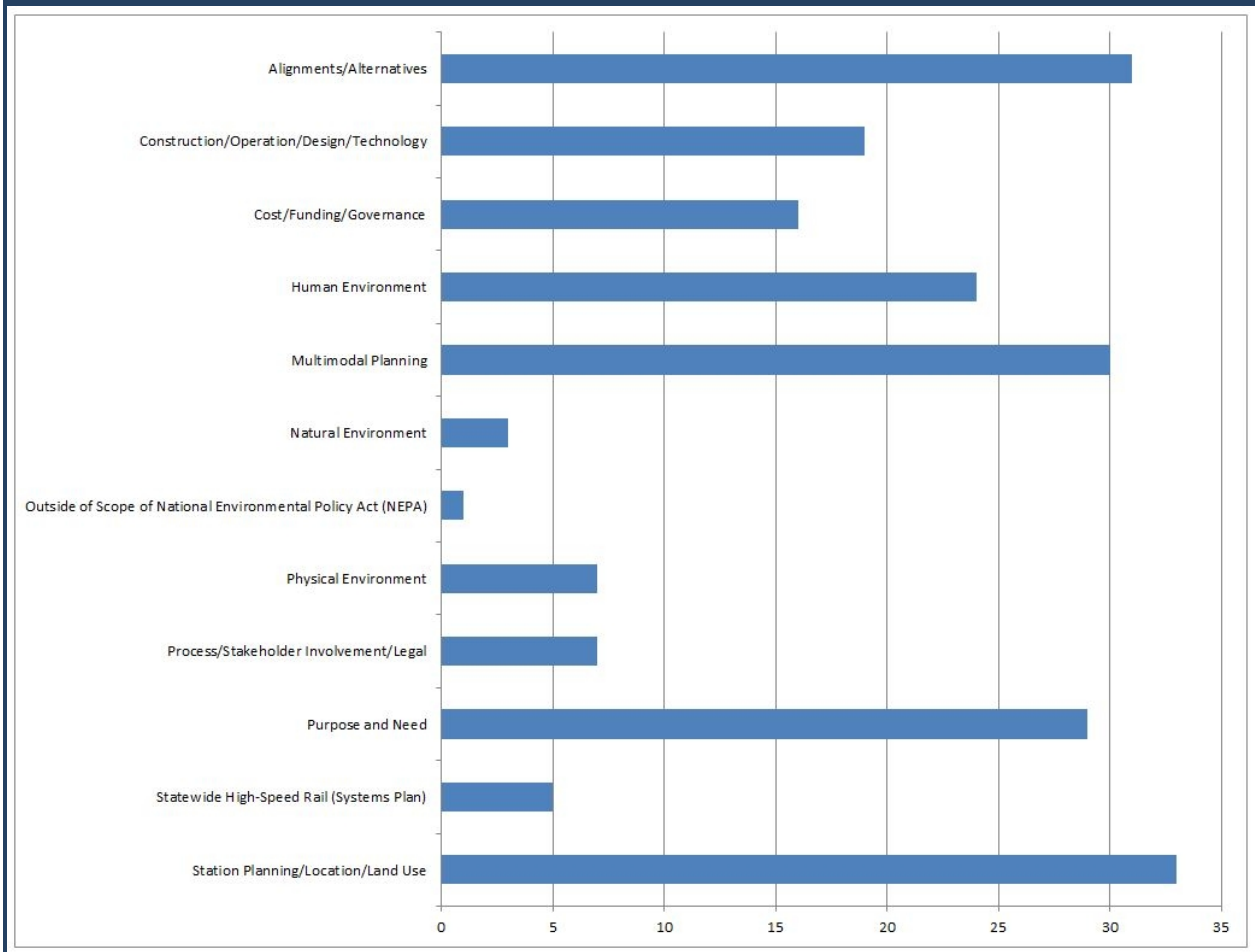
Issues and concerns were also raised by some stakeholders. Concerns generally included the Project cost, available funding, pedestrian access and safety, environmental impacts, public involvement, and other topics, as discussed in more detail below.

2.4 *Public Comments by Environmental Categories*

Public comments were grouped into major categories, consistent with the topics to be studied in the EIS. **Figure 2-1** demonstrates the frequency of comments by environmental category.



Figure 2-1: Public Comments by Environmental Category



2.4.1 Potential Corridors and Station Locations

Many of comments received were in support of a faster passenger rail connection between Dallas and Fort Worth. Other themes included:

- Use existing transportation corridors;
- Explore efficiencies that could be gained by investing in and using the TRE line;
- Provide three stations with stops in downtown Fort Worth, the Arlington Entertainment District, and downtown Dallas;
- Ensure connectivity to other proposed passenger rail projects;
- Provide sufficient and affordable long-term parking around station locations;
- Locate maintenance facilities to maximize local job opportunities; and,

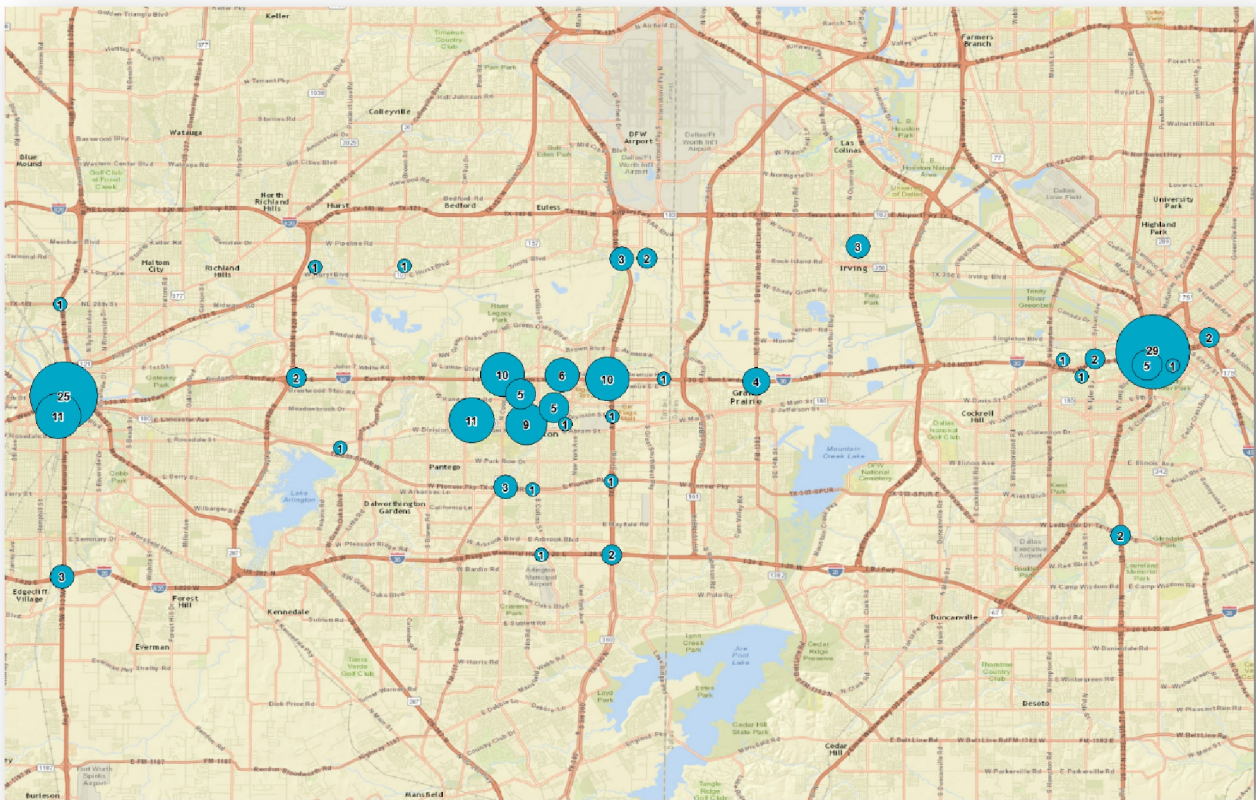


- Avoid placing a station in Arlington due to a lack of sufficient public transit to support intermodal goals, concern that trip times would be reduced by having an intermediate station, and access to the station and the Entertainment District is not pedestrian-friendly.

2.4.1.1 Station Location Preference Exercise

A preliminary preference exercise was conducted during the public scoping meetings. The exercise allowed meeting participants to express preferences for potential station locations. **Figure 2-2** depicts the results of the preference exercise. It is important to note that this information does not serve as a statistically representative sample of regional or local public opinion.

Figure 2-2: Station Location Preferences





2.4.2 Proposed Draft Purpose and Need

Many public comments focused on the Project's purpose and need, environmental concerns, potential cost and funding, system features and schedule, transportation connectivity, and the need for agency and Project coordination. Key opinions expressed included:

- Provide high-speed rail that is efficient, safe, and reliable, and improves regional and state mobility;
- Create a “one-seat ride” experience, connecting to other future high-speed rail corridors and allow riders to depart from Houston and ride to Fort Worth without having to change trains in Dallas;
- Coordinate with the Dallas to Houston High-Speed Rail Project, local agencies (i.e. NCTCOG, transit agencies), and transportation projects (such as I-30 improvements) in the development of the EIS and selection of alignments and station locations;
- Choose the alternative that is the most cost-effective, uses existing transportation corridors to the fullest extent possible, and minimizes relocation impacts/displacement;
- Do not build the Project given that the transportation system in the Metroplex functions effectively, demand is insufficient to support ridership, the Project is not economically sustainable, and/or public funds would be better spent on highway projects or improvements to the TRE corridor/service;
- Spend transportation funds to enhance social equity by providing mobility to underserved segments of the population that would most benefit (e.g. public transit);
- Consider the region's growing population, particularly from western Tarrant County, when calculating long-term demand for new high-speed rail service;
- Use the same rail technology as the Dallas to Houston High-Speed Rail Project, or consider alternative technologies;
- Ensure strong connections between the Project and existing transit services (Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), Trinity Railway Express (TRE), The Fort Worth Transportation Authority (The T); and,
- Ensure that the Project does not slow the implementation of the Dallas to Houston High-Speed Rail Project and construct the two projects concurrently, if possible.



2.4.3 *Environmental Issues and Concerns*

Some stakeholders raised issues or expressed concerns about potential environmental impacts. These issues and concerns included:

- Minimize relocations and displacements;
- Avoid floodplains and wetlands;
- Preserve wildlife habitat;
- Consider visual and noise impacts; and,
- Provide wildlife crossings across the rail alignment.

2.4.4 *Stakeholder Questions*

A number of participants had questions that will be answered as part of the Project EIS process including the costs associated with the Project, potential funding sources, rail alignments, number of stations, and station locations. Some participants wanted to know what type of rail technology the Project will use, which will not be determined as part of the EIS.

2.5 *TxDOT Responses to Public Scoping Comments*

TxDOT and FRA received more than 90 comments from members of the public, elected officials and local or regional government agencies during the Project scoping period between September 5 and December 15, 2014. The comments are categorized for further analysis by TxDOT, FRA, and the Project team into 11 major themes that cover the following topics:



Table 2-3: Public Scoping Responses to Comments by Environmental Category

Public Scoping Comment Responses to Comments by Environmental Category	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project Purpose and Need 2. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/Environmental <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2A. Human Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land Use and Land Use Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agricultural Land - Regional and Joint Development Opportunities ▪ Social and Economic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Neighborhoods - Community Facilities - Environmental Justice - Economic Impacts - Relocations and Acquisitions 2B. Physical Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aesthetics and Visual Resources ▪ Air Quality ▪ Hazardous Materials & Solid Waste Disposal ▪ Health, Safety, and Security ▪ Indirect and Cumulative Impacts ▪ Noise and Vibration ▪ Topography, Geology & Soils ▪ Cultural Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Archaeological Resources - Historic & Resources ▪ Parks and Recreation Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parks & Recreational Areas and Facilities - Section 4(f)/6(f) 2C. Natural Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aquatic Habitat ▪ Ecological Systems ▪ Habitat & Wildlife (Non-Wetlands, including Refuges) ▪ Hydrology & Water Resources ▪ Water Quality ▪ Wetlands ▪ Endangered, Rare and Threatened Species 3. Alignments/Alternatives 4. Construction/Operation/Design/Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Construction Issues ▪ Design Quality ▪ Implementation Planning ▪ Maintenance & Support Facilities ▪ Mitigation ▪ Operational Issues ▪ Rail Service/Operations ▪ Utility Issues 5. Cost/Funding/Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commission for High-Speed Rail ▪ FRA ▪ Funding ▪ Government/Elected Officials/Legislative Policy ▪ Project Cost ▪ TxDOT 6. Multimodal Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bike/Pedestrian ▪ Consistency with Other Plans ▪ Regional Growth/Planning ▪ Ridership ▪ Right of Way ▪ Traffic and Roadway ▪ Transit Impacts/Connectivity ▪ Transportation-Other 7. Process/Stakeholder Involvement/Legal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) ▪ Environmental Process ▪ Legal/Litigation ▪ Project Description ▪ Public/Agency Involvement ▪ Request for Meeting ▪ Schedule ▪ Scoping Process 8. Statewide High-Speed Rail (Systems Plan) 9. Station Planning, Location, and Land Use 10. Comment(s) Noted 11. Outside of Project Scope



2.6 TxDOT Responses to Public Scoping Comments

Per Texas Administrative Code, TxDOT developed responses to comments received. The majority of the responses explain how a question will be answered or an issue addressed as part of the EIS process. Response codes were generated for each environmental category and correspond to the number indicated. The responses, by theme, are as follows:

1. Project Purpose and Need

"A draft proposed Purpose and Need statement was developed to obtain public and agency comment during the scoping process, as required by the NEPA. The comments received as part of the scoping process will be used to inform potential revisions to the Project Purpose and Need statement for the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS will provide the documentation to justify the Project need."

2. NEPA/Environmental Issues

2A – Human Environment

"The Draft EIS will include an evaluation of potential impacts to land use, neighborhoods, community facilities, relocations, the socio-economic conditions in the region, and the economic impact from the Project."

2B – Physical Environment

"The Draft EIS will include an evaluation of potential impacts to aesthetics and visual resources, air quality, hazardous material sites, health and safety, noise and vibration, historic and cultural resources, and parks and recreational areas."

2C – Natural Environment

"The Draft EIS will include an evaluation of potential impacts to aquatic and terrestrial habitats, wildlife, wetlands, streams, water quality, and threatened and endangered species."

3. Alignments/Alternatives

"Following preparation of the Purpose and Need statement for the Draft EIS, TxDOT and FRA will undertake an alternatives screening process to identify the range of reasonable alternatives to be studied in detail in the Draft EIS. These alternatives, including alignments and station areas, will build upon those recommended in TOPRS, as well as other potential alternatives identified by members of the public, agencies, and other stakeholders during the public scoping process. The alternatives analysis will be shared with the public. It is anticipated that the Draft EIS will identify a preferred alternative."



4. Construction/Operation/Design/Technology

“Design and construction-period impacts of intercity passenger trains with diesel or electric propulsion, as well as track design, operational issues, social and environmental impacts, ridership, and other potential Project impacts or benefits will be evaluated and included in the Draft EIS. It is anticipated that a preferred alternative will be identified in the Draft EIS from these alternatives, which will be shared with the public for review and comment.”

5. Cost/Funding/Governance

“As part of the Project, potential preliminary estimated costs for construction, operations, and right-of-way acquisition, as well as potential funding sources and public-private investment opportunities for rail operations and development adjacent to station locations will be identified. This information will be considered, along with other factors, in the identification of a preferred alternative for public review and comment in the Draft EIS. One of the alternatives evaluated in the Draft EIS will be a “no build” alternative, which will consider the impacts to the human and natural environment if the project were not built and will serve as the basis of comparison for the “build” alternatives.”

6. Multimodal Planning

“The Draft EIS will include an analysis of the existing transportation systems in the region (automobiles, transit, air, pedestrian/bikes), as well as other existing and proposed passenger rail services connecting major cities within and outside of Texas. Part of the proposed draft Purpose and Need Statement is to develop an intercity passenger rail system that enhances connectivity between the varying systems already in the study area.”

7. Process/Stakeholder Involvement/Legal

“Stakeholder participation and transparency are essential elements of the Project and the NEPA process. TxDOT and FRA will evaluate many factors in the development of the Draft EIS including public and agency comments. Additional opportunities for public engagement and stakeholder input will be provided throughout the environmental review process.”



8. Statewide High-Speed Rail (Systems Plan)

“The purpose of the Project is to provide a financially viable, safe, reliable, congestion-relieving and environmentally sustainable intercity passenger rail service connecting Dallas and Fort Worth that provides a key link between the existing and developing Texas high-performance passenger rail service. While standing on its own as a critical part of the region’s transportation infrastructure, the Project will be evaluated for its potential to provide a critical link in a future state and/or national passenger rail system, including the proposed high-speed rail line between Dallas and Houston on the east, and existing passenger rail line from Oklahoma City through Fort Worth, and future connectivity to Austin and/or South Texas on the west.”

9. Station Planning, Location, and Land Use

“The Draft EIS will include an evaluation of station area alternatives. The analysis will include reviews of existing land use plans and development potential, population and projected ridership for the new passenger rail service, access and connections to other modes of transportation, and other social and environmental considerations. It is anticipated that a preferred alternative, including general station areas will be identified in the Draft EIS for public review and comment.”

10. Comment(s) Noted

“Thank you for your comment(s). They have been noted as part of the Project record.”

11. Outside of Project Scope

“This issue falls outside the scope of the Project under NEPA.”



3.0 Agency Scoping Process and Comments

3.1 Agency Scoping Process Overview

TxDOT and FRA held two Agency Scoping Meetings in October 2014 for the purpose of gaining input from federal and state resource agencies, as well as regional and local jurisdictions and transportation agencies. At the meetings, TxDOT and FRA briefly described the Project, summarized the environmental review process and schedule, and facilitated a question and answer period to identify opportunities, constraints and concerns. Agencies were encouraged to submit written comments for inclusion in the Scoping Summary Report.

Agencies representatives are identified in **Table 3-1**. Minutes from the Agency Scoping Meetings are provided in the Scoping Summary Report Appendix.

Table 3-1: Agency Scoping Meeting Participants

Federal	State	Regional	Local
Federal Highway Administration*	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department	North Central Texas Council of Governments	City of Fort Worth
Federal Transit Administration*	Texas Historical Commission	Tarrant County	City of Dallas
United States Army Corps of Engineers*		DART - Dallas Area Rapid Transit	
United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6*		The T – Fort Worth Transportation Authority	
United States Fish and Wildlife Service*		NTTA - North Texas Tollway Authority	
		DFW Airport	
* Cooperating Agencies			



TxDOT and FRA also received formal correspondence from jurisdictions within the Project study area, including the cities of Fort Worth, Arlington, Dallas, and Irving. The comments received from elected officials, cities and other officials are included in the comments and responses matrix in the Scoping Summary Report Appendix.

3.2 Cooperating Agencies

TxDOT and FRA serve as co-lead agencies for the Project. Prior to the Agency Scoping Meetings, FRA invited six federal agencies to serve as “cooperating agencies” in the development and review of the Project’s EIS.

The role of cooperating agencies is defined in NEPA regulations and in the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1508.5). A cooperating agency is any federal agency, other than a lead agency, that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposed project or project alternative. Cooperating agencies have a higher degree of authority, responsibility, and involvement in the environmental review process

FRA invited the following agencies to act as cooperating agencies in the EIS process. Those in *italic* text participated in the scoping process:

- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
- *Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)*
- *Federal Transit Administration (FTA)*
- *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, represented by the Fort Worth District (USACE)*
- *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)*
- *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)*

3.3 Agency Scoping Summary – Major Themes

The major cities in the Project study area each expressed support for the concept of an intercity passenger rail system connecting major cities in Texas, including the opportunity for increased transportation options and economic development. The cities of Fort Worth, Arlington, and Dallas all expressed a preference for a station location in proximity to existing downtown stations or, in the case of Arlington, in the Entertainment District.





In addition, representatives from 15 federal, state, regional and transportation agencies, offered the following initial comments through the Agency Scoping Meetings:

Consider opportunities to:

- Align the study with the Dallas to Houston High-Speed Rail Project;
- Connect to existing regional transit systems;
- Coordinate with local agencies (e.g., NCTCOG, transit agencies);
- Invest in improvements within the TRE corridor;
- Use existing transportation corridors to avoid greater impacts;
- Factor population growth and travel demand, particularly from western Tarrant County; and,
- Connect with DFW Airport (create a north-south link).

Avoid adverse impacts to:

- EJ communities;
- Existing rail service (DART, TRE);
- Dallas Union Station & Fort Worth Intermodal Transportation Center;
- Trinity River;
- Historic properties in downtown Dallas and Fort Worth; and,
- I-30 interchanges and new managed lanes.

As stated above, detailed minutes from the Agency Scoping Meetings are provided in the Scoping Summary Report Appendix.





4.0 Next Steps in the Environmental Review Process

Following the scoping process, the Purpose and Need statement for the EIS will be drafted. It will be used to identify the range of reasonable alternatives that will be evaluated in the EIS, including a no-build alternative.

Once TxDOT and FRA have identified the range of alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS, in-depth analysis of existing conditions in the Project study area will be conducted to determine the potential impacts of the alternatives in comparison to each other and the no-build alternative. Throughout the evaluation process, additional coordination will occur with federal, state, and local agencies.

TxDOT and FRA will continue to conduct public outreach to ensure that the public is apprised of the Project's progress and has the opportunity to provide input. The anticipated Project schedule is shown in **Table 4-1**.

Table 4-1: Project Schedule

Project Milestone	Estimate Schedule
Notice of Intent Published	September 5, 2014
Project Scoping	September-December 2014
Project Scoping Concluded	December 15, 2014
Public Information Meeting	Mid-2015
Alternatives Analysis & Technical Studies	Mid-2015 – Mid-2016
Draft Environmental Document (DEIS) & Public Hearing	Late 2016
Record of Decision by FRA and Final Environmental Document (FEIS)	2017
Public Involvement and Outreach	Ongoing