

Dallas to Houston HSR EIS Environmental Justice Outreach

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Dallas to Houston HSR Project?

The Dallas to Houston Project would connect Dallas and Houston with a dedicated High-Speed Rail (HSR) system proposed by a private company, Texas Central High-Speed Railway (TCR).

Where would it go?

In 2015, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) completed an independent evaluation of potential HSR corridors between Dallas to Houston. FRA evaluated corridors next to existing freight and passenger rail lines, along Interstate 45 (IH-45), and next to gas pipelines and high-voltage electricity lines (utility corridor). FRA recommended further study of the utility corridor. Within this corridor, TCR proposed different potential routes for the HSR tracks. FRA evaluated 21 different alignment alternatives proposed by TCR, and recommended six end-to-end Build Alternatives to be studied in the Draft EIS. The final HSR route will be determined when the engineering and environmental analyses are complete.

Where will the HSR trains run and where will it stop?

In Dallas, a potential station is proposed south of Interstate 30 (IH-30), near downtown. In Houston, there are three potential station locations near IH-610, US 290 and IH-10. In between the two metropolitan areas, a Brazos Valley Station is proposed in Grimes County. The final route and station locations will be determined when the engineering and environmental analyses are complete.

What is high-speed rail?

A high-speed passenger rail system travels at speeds over 150 miles per hour (mph) and can reach speeds up to 225 mph. They are sometimes called bullet trains. The trains run on electricity. There are no high-speed passenger rail systems in the United States although California is currently constructing its high-speed rail system.

TCR proposed the Dallas to Houston Project to provide an alternative to traveling by car on I-45 or air. The Dallas to Houston Project is proposed to travel at speeds up to 205 mph, meaning that the 240-mile trip between Dallas and Houston would take approximately 90 minutes. TCR proposes to use the N700 Tokaido Shinkansen HSR (bullet train) technology currently in operation in Japan.

The proposed HSR trains would travel in a “closed” system, meaning that the train would run on dedicated tracks for HSR passenger rail service only. HSR trains would use a specialized track designed specifically for the Japanese bullet trains. Freight and Amtrak trains operate on diesel fuel. The HSR trains would operate on electricity. The HSR trains would not run on existing or planned freight and passenger rail lines, such as Amtrak or BNSF rail lines. Additionally, only the HSR trains could run on the HSR tracks. There would be no railroad/roadway crossings for the HSR system. Existing or future roads would either go over or under the HSR tracks.

What is the Federal Railroad Administration's role on the Project?

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has the authority to regulate the safety of railroads. Currently, there is no existing HSR system in the United States; and there are no HSR railroad safety regulations. FRA is reviewing the Project's technology to develop applicable safety regulations specifically for the Dallas to Houston Project. This action requires FRA to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Through this environmental review, the Project's final route and the location of all stations, maintenance facilities and substations will be determined. Information related to this process can be found at <http://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P0700>.

As part of the EIS, the environmental and social impacts of the Project's Build Alternatives will be analyzed. The EIS will also include impacts associated with Project infrastructure and facilities, such as stations and maintenance facilities.

What is the status of the Project?

FRA is currently preparing a Draft EIS, which will be issued for public review and comment in late 2016.

How can I be involved?

Public involvement is a key component of the EIS process. FRA will host a series of public hearings to get input and feedback on the Draft EIS in late 2016. In the meantime, you may provide comments at today's listening session or directly on the FRA website at: <https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P0779>

How do I get more information about the project?

For more information on this project, please visit FRA's website at <https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P0700>, or contact:

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What is an Environmental Impact Statement?

- The EIS being prepared under FRA's guidance is a document required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA requires federal agencies evaluate the effects of their actions on the human environment.
- The EIS identifies cooperating federal agencies, in addition to FRA, and defines their roles and responsibilities for the preparation of the EIS
- The EIS defines the Project, describes the Project study area, analyzes potential environmental consequences associated with construction and operation of the Project and identifies avoidance, minimization or mitigation strategies
- The EIS details public involvement activities required under NEPA