

On Track

Dallas To Houston High-Speed Rail Environmental Impact Statement

January 2018



Dallas to Houston High-Speed Rail System

The Dallas to Houston HSR System would travel at speeds up to 205 mph, resulting in a 90-minute trip between the two cities. It would be a “closed” system, meaning that the train would run on dedicated high-speed rail tracks that would not share any intersections with roadways or other train tracks (grade separated).



Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Dallas to Houston High-Speed Rail: Now Ready for Public Review

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has issued the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Dallas to Houston High-Speed Rail (HSR) Project (Project). The Draft EIS is available for public review at the locations shown in Table 1 and on FRA’s website at <https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P0700>. The Draft EIS documents FRA’s evaluation of Texas Central High Speed Railway (TCRR) and its affiliates’ proposal to construct and operate a 240-mile, for-profit, HSR system connecting Dallas and Houston using the Japanese N700 Tokaido Shinkansen technology.

The Draft EIS describes FRA’s evaluation of the possible environmental impacts of the Project and recommends a preferred alternative from among six Build Alternatives between Dallas and Houston. In preparing the document, FRA, as the lead federal agency, worked in cooperation with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Surface Transportation Board (STB), United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) provided technical assistance to FRA in the preparation of the Draft EIS. In addition, public feedback was considered along with input from other federal, state, and local agency stakeholders.

FRA completed the initial agency and public scoping process for the Project in early 2015. Next, FRA evaluated the four potential HSR corridors that were presented to the public and agencies during scoping, and reviewed alternative transportation modes (e.g., higher-speed and conventional speed rail services,

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Draft Environmental Impact Statement (cont.)

direct bus service, and expansion of Interstate Highway (IH)-45). FRA determined that these alternative modes would not meet the purpose and need of the project and eliminated them from further consideration. From the four potential HSR corridors evaluated, FRA carried the Utility Corridor forward for further analysis, but also retained elements of the other corridors to develop reasonable alignment alternatives for consideration in the Draft EIS.

TCRR then developed 21 potential alignment alternatives for FRA's evaluation. These alignment alternatives were primarily located within the Utility Corridor; however, in response to public scoping comments, TCRR also proposed alignment alternatives that used a portion of the IH-45 corridor. TCRR developed the potential alignment alternatives to avoid known environmental and engineering constraints.

FRA completed an independent analysis of TCR's alignment alternatives and identified eight segments that create six end-to-end Build Alternatives. TCRR identified one Dallas Terminal Station near IH-30, just south of downtown Dallas; one Brazos Valley Station location near State Highway (SH)-30 in Grimes County; and three Terminal Station options in Houston: Houston Industrial Site (south of Hempstead Road), Houston Northwest Mall Site (north of Hempstead Road), and Houston Transit Center Site (west of IH-610). FRA evaluated these Build Alternatives and the proposed stations in the Draft EIS.

Public Comments on the Draft EIS

FRA will hold 10 public hearings in January and February 2018, which will allow the public to comment on the Dallas to Houston HSR Draft EIS. FRA will conduct one hearing in each of the impacted counties beginning January 29, 2018. The locations, dates, and times of all of the public hearings are noted in Table 2. Before the public hearing presentation begins, an open house will be held to allow for comments, questions, and review of project exhibits. FRA and TCRR staff will be available to answer questions at that time. The public hearing presentation will begin at 6 pm, followed by a public comment period. Note that the hearings in Harris and Grimes counties will start at 6 pm with a presentation at 7 pm.

Comments may also be submitted to FRA throughout the Draft EIS public comment period from December 22, 2017 to March 9, 2018. Comments may be emailed to DallasHoustonHSR@urs.com or directly to FRA at kevin.wright@dot.gov. Comments may also be mailed to FRA at Kevin Wright, Environmental Protection Specialist, Federal Railroad Administration, 1200 New Jersey Ave. SE, MS-20, Washington, D.C. 20590. A comment may also be directly entered on FRA's website at <https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/PO700>.

What is an Environmental Impact Statement?

The EIS is a document required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for any projects resulting in significant environmental impacts that receive federal funding or require other federal approval. In this case, approval for the safe operation of a new technology is required.

- FRA has jurisdiction over every area of railroad safety and is authorized to prescribe regulations and issue orders as necessary for railroad safety. Current FRA regulations do not comprehensively address safety requirements for train speeds above 150 mph, such as the Project's proposed operations. Therefore, FRA may issue a Rule of Particular Applicability (regulations that apply to a specific railroad or a specific type of operation), impose requirements or conditions by order(s) or waiver(s) or by taking other regulatory action to ensure the Project is operated safely. This regulatory action constitutes a major federal action that significantly affects the quality of the human environment, and so an EIS is required.
- This EIS discloses project information, describes the Project and study areas, and analyzes potential benefits and impacts to the environment associated with construction and operation of a HSR system.
- An EIS also documents the lead agency (ies)'s decision-making process for selecting (or recommending, in the case of a Draft EIS) a preferred alternative.
- The EIS process affords feedback from agencies and the public at various points in the Project's development process.

Table 1. Locations where the Draft EIS for the Dallas to Houston HSR Project can be viewed

County	Location
Dallas	J. Erik Jonsson Central Library: 1515 Young Street, Dallas, Texas 75201
Dallas	Martin Luther King Branch Library: 2922 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, Dallas, Texas 75215
Dallas	Paul Laurence Dunbar Lancaster-Kiest Branch Library: 2008 E Kiest Boulevard, Dallas, Texas 75216
Dallas	Pleasant Grove Branch Library: 7310 Lake June Road, Dallas, Texas 75217
Ellis	Ellis County Courts and Administration: 109 S. Jackson, Waxahachie, Texas 75165
Ellis	Ennis Public Library Central Library: 501 W Ennis Avenue, Ennis, Texas 75119
Navarro	Corsicana Library: 100 N 12th Street, Corsicana, Texas 75110
Navarro	Navarro County Courthouse: 300 W. 3rd Avenue, Corsicana, Texas 75110
Freestone	Freestone County Courthouse: 118 East Commerce Street, Room 205, Fairfield, Texas 75840
Freestone	Teague Public Library Central Library: 400 Main Street, Teague, Texas 75860
Limestone	Gibbs Memorial Library Central Library: 305 E Rusk Street, Mexia, Texas 76667
Limestone	Limestone County Clerk: 200 W State Street, Suite 102, Groesbeck, Texas 76642
Leon	Buffalo Public Library: 1005 Hill Street, Buffalo, Texas 75831
Leon	Leon County Clerk’s Office: 155 N Cass Street, First Floor, Centerville, Texas 75833
Madison	Madison County Courthouse: 103 West Trinity, Suite 104, Madisonville, Texas 77864
Madison	Madison County Library: 605 S May Street, Madisonville, Texas 77864
Grimes	Grimes County Clerk: 101 Main Street, Anderson, Texas 77830
Grimes	Navasota Public Library Central Library: 1411 E Washington Avenue, Navasota, Texas 77868
Waller	Waller County Courthouse: 836 Austin Street, Hempstead, Texas 77445
Waller	Waller County Library Central Library: 2331 11th Street, Hempstead, Texas 77445
Harris	Fairbanks Library: 7122 Gessner Road, Houston, Texas 77040
Harris	Houston Public Library: 500 McKinney Street, Houston, Texas 77002
Harris	Northwest Branch Library: 11355 Regency Green Drive, Cypress, Texas 77429
Harris	Spring Branch Memorial Library: 930 Corbindale Road, Houston, Texas 77024

Next Steps

After the close of the public comment period, FRA will consider and respond to every comment received as part of the preparation of the Final EIS. FRA will announce the availability and publication of the Final EIS to the public.

Upon completion of the Final EIS, FRA will issue a Record of Decision (ROD) on the Project in compliance with NEPA. If FRA selects a Build Alternative in the ROD, FRA would also document additional actions required by FRA or TCRR to initiate construction and monitor and mitigate impacts.

Table 2. Public Hearing Locations, Dates, and Times

January 29, 2018

Dallas County

5-9 pm

Wilmer-Hutchins High School

5520 Langdon Rd.

Dallas, TX 75241

January 31, 2018

Limestone County

5-9 pm

Mexia High School

1120 N. Ross Ave.

Mexia, TX 76667

January 29, 2018

Navarro County

5-9 pm

Corsicana Middle School

4101 FM 744

Corsicana, TX 75110

February 5, 2018

Harris County

6-10 pm

Woodard Elementary School

17501 Cypress North Houston Rd

Cypress, TX 77433

January 30, 2018

Ellis County

Ennis High School

5-9 pm

2301 Ensign Rd

Ennis, TX 75119

February 5, 2018

Madison County

5-9 pm

Truman Kimbro Convention Center

111 W. Trinity

Madisonville, TX 77864

January 30, 2018

Leon County

5-9 pm

Leon High School

12168 US 79

Jewett, TX 75846

February 6, 2018

Waller County

5-9 pm

Waller High School

20950 Fields Store Rd

Waller, TX 77484

January 31, 2018

Freestone County

5-9 pm

Fairfield High School

631 Post Oak Rd

Fairfield, TX 75840

February 6, 2018

Grimes County

6-10 pm

Navasota Junior High School

9038 TX-90

Navasota, TX 77868

For more information:

To stay up-to-date on the Dallas to Houston HSR Project, visit FRA's website at <https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P0700>

Draft EIS Comment Period Extended to March 9, 2018

On December 22, 2018, the FRA distributed the Draft EIS for the Dallas to Houston High-Speed Rail Project. After receiving a request for an extension of the public comment period and assessing the volume of the Draft EIS, FRA has agreed to grant an additional 15-day extension of the public comment period.

FRA would like to afford the cooperating agencies and all members of the public the same 15-day extension of the public comment period. The comment period will now end on March 9, 2018.

