

7. HIGH SPEED RAIL UPDATE FROM TEXAS CENTRAL PARTNERS

BACKGROUND

The Texas Central High Speed Rail (HSR) project is a planned “Bullet Train” that would run approximately 240 miles between Houston and Dallas at speeds approaching 200 miles per hour. The planned trains would have multiple departures each day and have a 90-minute travel time between the two cities.

In December 2018, the Transportation Policy Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Texas Central Partners that called for the H-GAC Metropolitan Planning Organization to include the planned HSR in its planning processes. (A copy of the MOU is attached.) In January 2019, the TPC also included the Texas Central HSR project in the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan, with no TPC-programmed funds attached to the project.

CURRENT SITUATION

Texas Central Partners and Amtrak have recently announced plans to evaluate a potential partnership to further study and potentially advance the project. (A copy of an Amtrak news release is attached.)

Texas Central Partners will present an update on the project.

ACTION

For discussion only.

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**TEXAS
CENTRAL**

**Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Texas
Central's Delivery of High-Speed Train Service between
The Greater Houston Region and North Texas**

Whereas, the undersigned share a commitment to creating and leveraging public and private resources to enhance the mobility of travelers in Texas; and,

Whereas, growing populations within the two largest metro areas in Texas are served by expansive transportation networks including extensive transit networks and world-class tolled and non-tolled highway facilities; and,

Whereas, the Houston Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation planning in the eight-county Houston-Galveston area and H-GAC's Transportation Policy Council approves the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and,

Whereas, the RTP identifies the Region's mobility goals and policies over the next 25 year, and the RTP sets the policy and funding framework for the Region's modally-balanced transportation system and the identification of transportation facilities and services needed to support the Region's anticipated growth using available resources; and,

Whereas, Texas Central Rail Holdings, LLC and its affiliates (Texas Central), a Texas-based passenger railroad, have spent significant private capital on the validation and the development of a high-speed passenger train system that will connect the H-GAC region and North Texas; and,

Whereas, close coordination among the undersigned is required to maximize the opportunities for connectivity for the benefit of generations of Texans; and

Now, therefore, be it hereby resolved that the undersigned parties:

1. Plan to incorporate high-speed rail in regional transportation planning.

Now, therefore, be it hereby resolved that Texas Central, in addition, will:

1. As long as it is reasonable and prudent, continue to incur costs associated with the planning and positioning of its Houston station such that it can accommodate connectivity with other intermodal transportation connections under active consideration for construction, financing and implementation.
2. Not accept public federal or state grants from federal, state governments or through H-GAC for its planned North Texas to Greater Houston region service.

3. Participate in planning performed by H-GAC, METRO, TxDOT, City of Houston, and others to facilitate multi-modal connections between the Houston Terminal Station, the region's major activity centers, and major transportation corridors.

This Memorandum of Understanding is not legally binding.

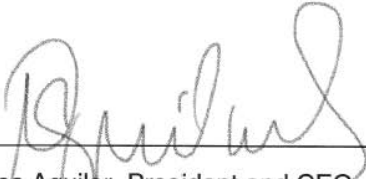
Signed and adopted by:



Alan Clark, Director of Transportation
Houston-Galveston Area Council

12/21/2018

Date



Carlos Aguilar, President and CEO
Texas Central Partners, LLC

1 / 17 / 19

Date



NEWSRELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 9, 2023

Texas Central and Amtrak Seek to Explore High-Speed Rail Service Opportunities between Dallas and Houston

WASHINGTON - Texas Central Partners (“Texas Central”) and Amtrak are seeking opportunities to advance planning and analysis work associated with the proposed Dallas-Houston 205-mph high-speed rail project to further determine its viability. Amtrak has cooperated with Texas Central on various initiatives since 2016 and the two entities are currently evaluating a potential partnership to further study and potentially advance the project.

“If we are going to add more high-speed rail to this country, the Dallas to Houston Corridor is a compelling proposition and offers great potential,” said **Amtrak Senior Vice President of High-Speed Rail Development Programs Andy Byford**. “We believe many of the country’s biggest and fastest-growing metropolitan areas, like Houston and Dallas, deserve more high quality high-speed, intercity rail service and we are proud to bring our experience to evaluate this potential project and explore opportunities with Texas Central so the state can meet its full transportation needs.”

The proposed approximately 240-mile route would offer a total travel time of less than 90 minutes between two of the top five major U.S. metropolitan areas and would complement future, new and improved corridor and long-distance service in the southern region.

Texas Central and Amtrak have submitted applications to several federal programs in connection with further study and design work for the potential Dallas to Houston segment, including the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure Safety and Improvements (CRISI) grant program, the Corridor Identification and Development program, and the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail (FSP-National) grant program.

Amtrak has worked with Texas Central since 2016 when it entered into agreements to provide through-ticketing using the Amtrak reservation system and other support services for the planned high-speed rail line.

“This high-speed train, using advanced, proven Shinkansen technology, has the opportunity to revolutionize rail travel in the southern U.S., and we believe Amtrak could be the perfect partner to help us achieve that,” said **Texas Central Chief Executive Officer Michael Bui**. “We

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appreciate Amtrak's continued collaboration and look forward to continuing to explore how we can partner in the development of this important project."

High-speed rail service with mostly-dedicated and purpose-built rights of way can radically shrink trip times, achieve excellent reliability and provide significant capacity – all things that will drive ridership and help convince people to shift their trips to rail. When complete, this project is forecast to provide significant social, environmental, employment and economic benefits to the people of Texas. As an example, the project is estimated to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by over 100,000 tons per year, saving 65 million gallons of fuel while removing 12,500 cars per day from I-45.

"Dallas is the engine of the fourth largest and fastest growing region in the nation," **Dallas Mayor Eric L. Johnson** said. "It is bold, innovative endeavors like this that will propel Dallas toward an even more prosperous future. A high-speed rail line would revolutionize transportation in our region, serve as a catalyst for economic growth, and enhance connectivity among Texas residents and businesses."

"The collaboration between Texas Central and Amtrak is an important milestone for the City of Houston and this project," said **Mayor Sylvester Turner of Houston**. "Our city is committed to advancing transportation initiatives that support economic growth and enhance quality of life for our residents. The potential partnership of these two companies will accelerate the planning and analysis necessary for the successful implementation of a modern, efficient, and environmentally sustainable rail system connecting Houston and Dallas. I commend all parties involved for their dedication to this transformative project."

Construction and operations of the proposed high-speed rail line would bring significant economic benefits to the region, including thousands of well-paying construction jobs and nearly one thousand long-term, skilled operations and maintenance positions.

"The Ironworkers strongly support the Dallas-to-Houston high speed rail project," said **Jerry Wilson, Iron Workers District Council of Texas and the Mid South States**. "Not only is it safe and green, but it will provide hundreds of highly skilled, good paying jobs for our members as we transport, erect and install the infrastructure."

Byford joined Amtrak in April 2023 to begin developing a team focused on high-speed opportunities throughout the US. In his newly created role, he will develop and lead the execution of Amtrak's long-term strategy for high-speed rail throughout the country.

In addition to current Amtrak service in Texas and planned station improvements, Amtrak submitted grant applications for daily *Sunset Limited* service and the extension of the *Crescent* from Mississippi through Louisiana and Texas. Amtrak supports Kansas DOT's *Heartland Flyer* Extension Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) application that will connect Wichita and communities across Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas to the Amtrak network. Amtrak also supports Texas DOT's applications for the Texas Triangle (Dallas – Fort Worth – Houston – San Antonio) routes.

About Amtrak[®]

For more than 50 years, Amtrak has connected America and modernized train travel. Offering a safe, environmentally efficient way to reach more than 500 destinations across 46 states and parts of Canada, Amtrak provides travelers with an experience that sets a new standard. Book travel, check train status, access your eTicket and more through the [Amtrak app](#). Learn more at [Amtrak.com](#) and connect with us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About Texas Central

Texas Central, which includes its operating subsidiaries Texas Central Railroad & Infrastructure, Inc., and Integrated Texas Logistics, Inc., is the company undertaking the development, design, construction, finance, and operation of the innovative new high-speed passenger train line that intends to use the proven Shinkansen HSR technology to connect the fourth and fifth largest economies in the country, North Texas and Greater Houston, in less than 90 minutes, with one stop in the Brazos Valley. Visit [www.texascentral.com](#) to learn more.

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