



PASSENGER RAIL STUDY

Fact Sheet

Summer 2016

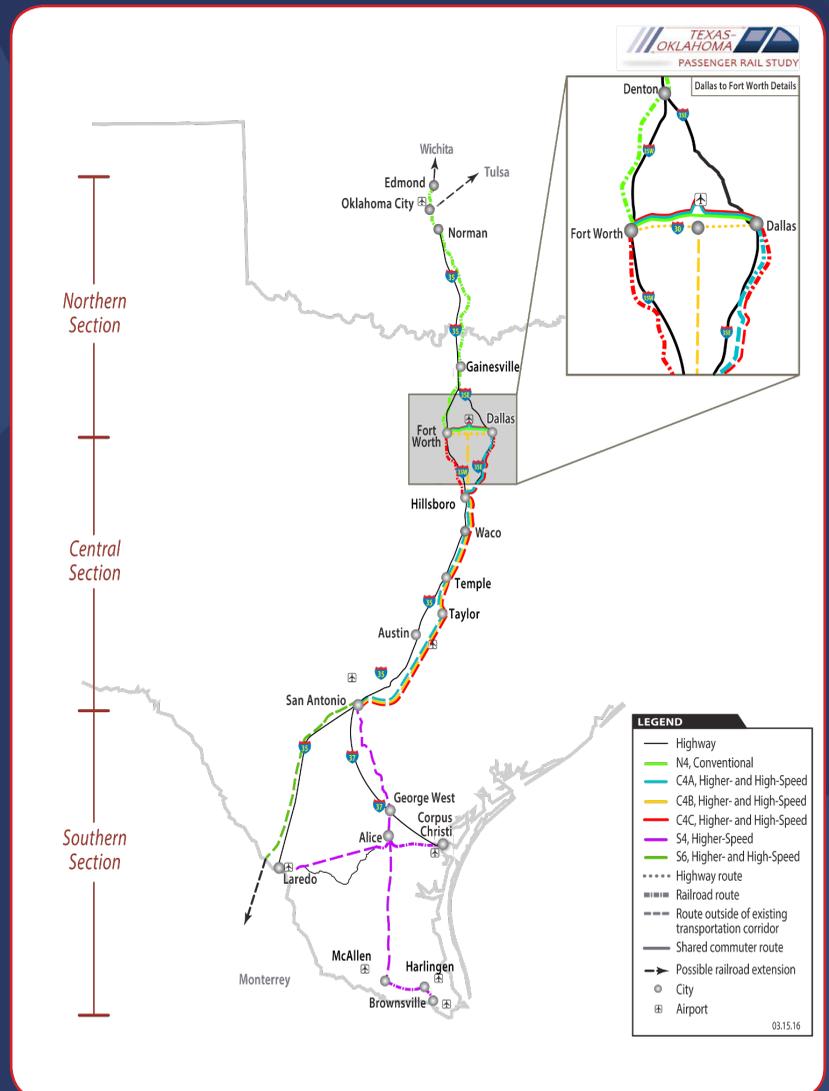
Potential rail routes and types of service are ready for review!

Texas' population and economy are booming, with much of its growth occurring in the already-congested IH-35 corridor. While the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) continues to look at roadway improvements to keep all of us and our economy moving, other options, such as passenger rail service, fit the needs of many travelers and would reduce demand on the state's roadways. Through the Texas-Oklahoma Passenger Rail Study (TOPRS), TxDOT considered how passenger rail service could fit into this corridor.

TOPRS has looked at several alternatives for rail routes in the 850-mile corridor from Oklahoma City to South Texas. Each route alternative could be matched with different types of rail service; with some service types being incompatible with some routes or portions of routes. TOPRS considered the following types of passenger rail service:

- Conventional rail
- Higher speed rail
- High speed rail

After the spring 2013 scoping period, the project team reviewed public comments and information about costs and feasibility for operating rail service in the corridor. The team developed screening criteria and compared each alternative (for both routes and service levels) to those criteria. Through this process, the project team arrived at a recommended set of alternatives shown on the map (right).



Routes proposed for approval.

How did the team screen alternatives?

OPERATIONS CRITERIA: measures related to maximizing ridership, providing a reasonable return on investment, and enhancing freight rail operations

INFRASTRUCTURE CRITERIA: measures related to minimizing impacts to private property and capital costs

ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERIA: measures related to minimizing impacts to natural, cultural, and social resources

Next steps

TxDOT has undertaken the study and as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements, a service-level environmental impact study (EIS) documents the costs, benefits, and impacts of rail route and service alternatives as compared to a no-build, or do nothing, alternative. A service development plan provides a high-level review of rail needs and potential service options in the corridor. TxDOT needs your input on the study findings as part of the final step in the environmental process. Public hearings have been scheduled for August 9, 2016 in Laredo, August 10, 2016 in Austin and August 11, 2016 in Arlington TX. At these hearings information will be presented on the project and the public will have the opportunity to submit their comments on the project. These comments will be evaluated and addressed in the final EIS and will be taken into consideration by the Federal Railroad Administration in their decision to approve the EIS document and issue a Record of Decision.



Passenger rail can offer a variety of amenities for passengers like wireless internet and comfortable seats.

Types of passenger rail

TOPRS will be evaluating the following types of passenger rail along the corridor:

CONVENTIONAL RAIL:

Trains would travel at speeds ranging from 70-90 miles per hour; service could be provided on existing tracks.

HIGHER SPEED RAIL:

Trains would travel at speeds ranging from 110-125 miles per hour; service would generally be provided on a combination of existing tracks and tracks constructed specifically for passenger rail.

HIGH SPEED RAIL:

Trains would travel at speeds ranging from 165-220 miles per hour; service would be provided on tracks specifically for passenger rail.

Get involved

Share your thoughts on the recommended set of alternatives online or in-person at a public hearing. Each public hearing will include the same information and will include a presentation and time to informally review detailed maps and provide comments. Can't make a public hearing? All materials and a comment form are available online.

Public hearings will be held in August in the following cities:

Laredo, TX
Austin, TX
Arlington, TX

Check the website at <http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/projects/studies/statewide/texas-oklahoma-rail.html> for the public hearing details and to participate online.

Persons with disabilities who plan to attend a hearing and who may need auxiliary aides or services are requested to contact Mark Werner at (512) 486-5137 at least three days prior to the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.