



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Texas Central picks preferred high-speed train passenger station in Houston

- **Preferred location will revitalize Northwest Mall site at I-610 and US 290**
- **Project seen as catalyst for economic growth, new jobs and development**
- **Local connections planned with major employment centers, public transit**

HOUSTON [Feb. 5, 2018] – Highlighting Houston’s history as a major railway hub, Mayor Sylvester Turner and developers of the Texas Bullet Train announced today the preferred site of the new passenger station, at the Northwest Mall near the interchange of Interstate 610 and US 290.

The terminal will be ideally located in a high-growth area, with easy access to employment centers, including the Galleria, the Energy Corridor and downtown. The station not only will be a catalyst for economic growth but it also will offer a convenient, efficient and direct network for passengers to and from local transit systems.

The selection comes about a month after federal regulators released an environmental analysis that said the 200-mph, Houston-to-North Texas train would alleviate the strain on the state’s existing infrastructure and is needed to accommodate growing demands.

“Houston continues to grow. Growing the smart way includes providing a wider choice of transportation options beyond more private vehicles and more roads. The Texas Bullet Train fits the transportation paradigm shift I have called for. And now with a preferred location for the Houston station, we are one big step closer to boarding for an exciting trip to the Brazos Valley and on to Dallas,” Mayor Sylvester Turner said.

Texas Central, the high-speed train developers, released maps and conceptual renderings – final designs are pending – that show a multi-level station on a 45-acre site. It will link seamlessly with other forms of transportation, including proposed traveler-friendly connections with the greater Houston region.

Houston business executive Drayton McLane Jr., chairman of the board of directors for Texas Central, said the company is looking forward to working with the city and the region on an innovative project that will help the economy, generate more local revenue and provide new job opportunities.

“As our state grows, we’re moving further apart as a result of travel time and increasing congestion. The Texas Bullet Train answers that. This will bring us closer together and fuel a super economy that rivals any in the world,” McLane said.

“This is a new model for infrastructure improvements - it’s transformational. Everyone along the route will benefit. The entire state, and especially all the counties and communities along the

route, will see gains. That includes getting more in tax revenue from the train and from ticket sales and more local jobs and business for those helping to build the project,” McLane said.

Jack Matthews, president of Matthews Southwest, will be developing the station project. “We look forward to helping create a new community that will also bring a transportation asset to all Houstonians,” Matthews said. “We are excited to work in an area with so much potential for vibrancy, including transit-oriented development.”

The Federal Railroad Administration’s (FRA) recently released Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) outlined three station options in northwest Houston. Studies show the center of Houston’s population base is growing north and west of the Central Business District.

Texas Central said the mall site is preferred because of minimal environmental and community effects. And it allows the high-speed train largely to follow existing rights of way, while providing passengers with easy, efficient roadway access and connectivity with METRO’s Northwest Transit Center and other options.

In mid-December, the FRA identified a single, preferred route for the train that does not extend into the downtown core. Doing so potentially would create significant effects on the community and property, including unfavorable impacts from construction, higher costs and extended building schedules.

Revitalizing the mall site, spurring new growth

Texas Central, an investor-owned project, is not taking federal or state grants for construction or operations. It has reached an agreement with owners of the mall property, which will be repurposed as a train and transit hub, creating a robust market for new shops, restaurants, entertainment, hotels, condominiums and other development.

The Texas Bullet Train will connect the state’s two largest cities – and half of the state’s population – in 90 minutes in a safe, reliable and efficient manner.

Federal regulators, in their environmental report, cited the Houston station’s many economic benefits, including an increase in property values within a half-mile of the terminal as a result of the train project. That’s in addition to new and related transit-oriented development in the area.

“The impact to property tax revenue would be beneficial for all local jurisdictions,” the FRA said. “These additional resources would benefit schools, libraries, parks, municipal utilities, hospitals and emergency services that are funded through property taxes.”

The FRA report says the train’s preferred route mostly runs along transmission lines in a utility corridor between North Texas and Houston, with a midway stop in the Brazos Valley to serve Huntsville, Bryan-College Station, Texas A&M University and others.

The report provides additional guidance as the project moves into its pre-construction phase, minimizing impacts on the environment and communities along the 240-mile path.

The project will create 10,000 jobs during each year of construction and about 1,500 full-time jobs when operations start.

Local companies also will benefit, through building the system and maintenance facilities, supplying materials and providing long-term support for the state's newest industry. And Texas Central is committed to local sourcing for its workforce and materials.

"Fast, reliable and economically competitive transportation could increase the supply of skilled workers available, decrease the costs of work-related travel and improve supply chains for an overall positive impact," the FRA said.

Station design, local road improvements

According to the federal report, the Houston station's concourses will consist of public areas, restaurants, bars, seating areas, concessions and newsstands, along with pedestrian connections to an adjacent parking facility.

Improvements also are planned for Post Oak Road at Hempstead Road, Post Oak Road at Old Katy Road and West 18th Street at Hempstead Road. These will be designed in part to alleviate current congestion and improve traffic flow.

The FRA is taking public comments on the environmental report and will evaluate the preferred station site in advance of issuing a final assessment.

The station selection marks the latest train-related announcement for Texas Central and Houston, whose official seal boasts a train engine as a symbol of progress. Houston once so dominated Texas rails that it was known as the place "where 17 railroads meet the sea."

In August, the two announced an economic development and jobs-creating plan related to the Texas Bullet Train. Under that agreement, Texas Central is committed to recruiting construction contractors, subcontractors and employees from the local job market for the construction of the project and its maintenance and operation.

In addition, the city and Texas Central will participate in the study and design of "efficient multi-modal connections" between the Houston station and the city's major activity centers.

The joint agreement says the project will have a "substantial and long-lasting positive impact on the city's economy, serve as a catalyst for future growth, create jobs and infuse tax revenue into the state and the local communities."

It says the train will help cut traffic congestion and related air emissions, providing "sound, fast and comfortable transportation alternatives," using "world-class, proven technology."

The bullet train is expected to remove 14,630 cars daily from Interstate 45, which will save 8.5 million gallons of gas a year. Also, the train will be using the industry's safest technology, while I-45 is the second deadliest highway in America.

ABOUT TEXAS CENTRAL

Texas Central is developing a new high-speed train that will connect North Texas, the Brazos Valley and Houston, using proven, world-class technology. The 90-minute trip will provide a safe, reliable and productive transportation alternative. The company's market-led approach is backed by investors, not government grants, a new business model for infrastructure advances. Texas Central and its affiliated entities will be responsible for the system's design, finance, construction, operation and maintenance.

MEDIA INQUIRIES

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