

Fort Worth-Houston High-Speed Rail Project

Corridor Identification and Development Program

Frequently Asked Questions

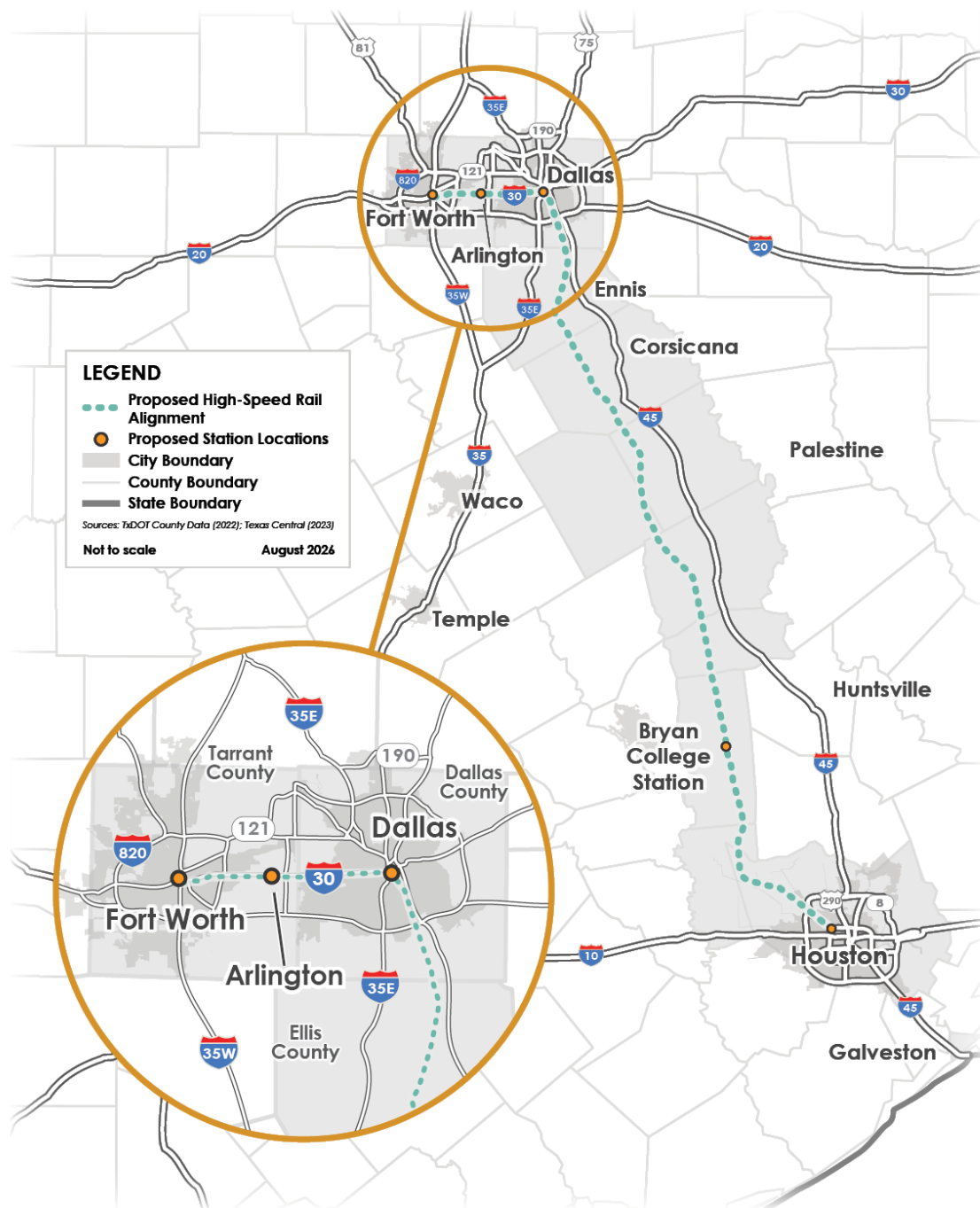
The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is the recipient of a grant through the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Corridor Identification and Development Program (Corridor ID) to develop a Service Development Plan (SDP) for a proposed high-speed passenger rail corridor connecting Fort Worth and Houston. These questions and answers are intended to help the public, stakeholders, and partner agencies understand the project and the current phase of work.

THE PROJECT

What is the Fort Worth-Houston High-Speed Rail Project?

The Fort Worth-Houston High-Speed Rail Project (Project) is a proposed 271-mile passenger rail connection linking North Central Texas and the Houston region. The corridor is envisioned as a dedicated, closed-system operation with speeds exceeding 200 miles per hour. It would begin in downtown Fort Worth, with additional proposed stations in Arlington, Dallas, and the Brazos Valley through Grimes County, and terminate in Houston.

PROJECT MAP



Why is this project needed?

The Dallas-Fort Worth area's population of 8.9 million today is anticipated to grow to over 12.4 million by 2050. The Houston Metro area is projected to grow to over 10 million people over this same period. Together, the two regions account for roughly half of Texas' total population and more than half of the state's gross domestic product. The entire state is experiencing unprecedented growth that is demanding alternative transportation modes to connect economic hubs. Currently, there is no direct passenger rail connection between Dallas and Houston, and the existing road and air transportation networks face increasing congestion and capacity constraints. High-speed rail provides a safe, reliable, and convenient alternative to driving and would eventually connect to other high-speed rail networks. Overtime, it will link megaregions in the Texas Triangle and nationwide.

How does the Project relate to prior high-speed rail planning in Texas?

This Project builds on two other planning initiatives. The former Texas Central Railroad, a privately funded entity now operating as Texas High Speed Rail Holdings LLC, completed preliminary engineering and a Final Environmental Impact Statement for high-speed rail between Dallas and Houston. Subsequently, the corridor received a Record of Decision from FRA in September 2020.

Since 2020, NCTCOG has been studying high-speed rail between Fort Worth, Arlington, and Dallas through the Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation Connections Study. Environmental documentation is anticipated to be completed in 2027.

This new Corridor ID study brings these two efforts together and evaluates the full Fort Worth to Houston corridor as a single connected system.

Who is leading this study?

NCTCOG is the local agency sponsor managing the project and is responsible for general project management activities, developing a detailed work plan and project schedule, and overseeing quality assurance and quality control. NCTCOG is also tasked with developing a comprehensive stakeholder involvement plan. The Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization policy body for the Dallas-Fort Worth area, will make final recommendations based on study outcomes and stakeholder input.

The FRA administers the Corridor ID grant and provides technical oversight. HNTB serves as the consultant developing the statement of work, schedule, and cost estimate for the Service Development Plan (SDP). Subsequently, a consultant will develop the SDP for implementation in future phases. NCTCOG is also working with the Texas Department of Transportation and Texas High Speed Rail Holdings, LLC.

THE CORRIDOR ID PROGRAM

What is the FRA Corridor Identification and Development Program?

The FRA Corridor ID Program is a comprehensive intercity passenger rail planning and development program established by the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and administered

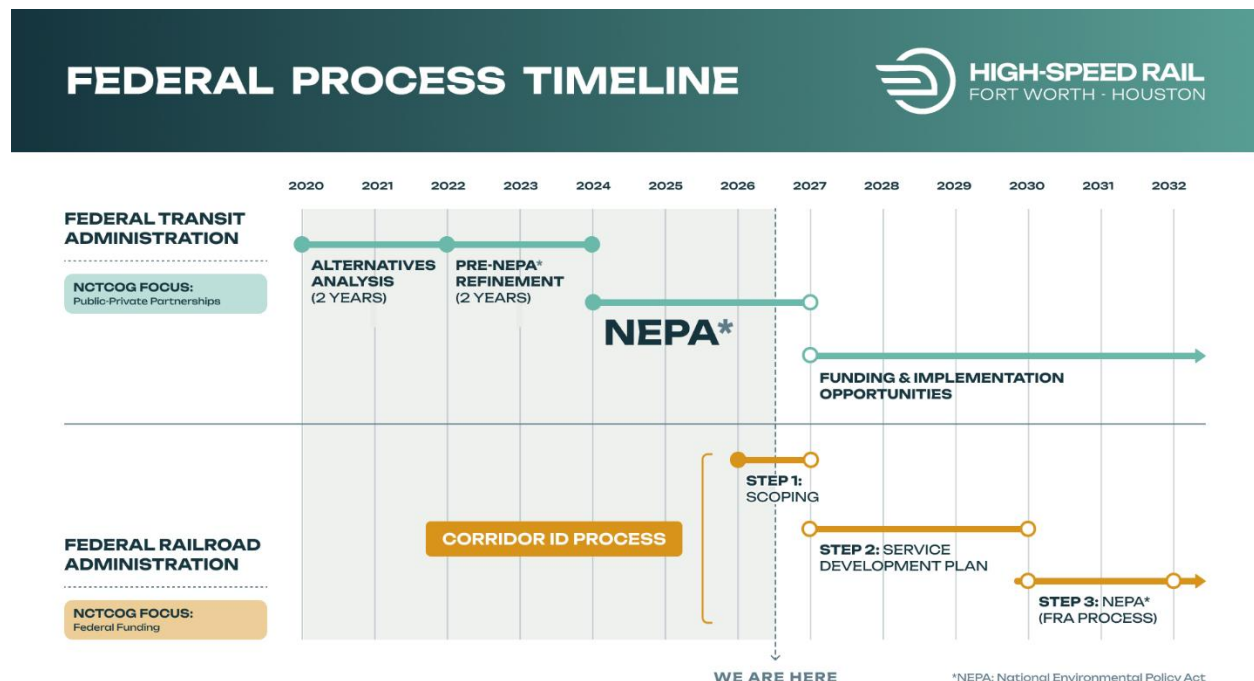
by the FRA. It helps guide intercity passenger rail development throughout the United States, creating a pipeline of projects ready for final design and construction. The program is organized into three steps—development of a statement of work, schedule, and cost estimate for an SDP; preparing the SDP; and completing the preliminary engineering and environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

What is the Service Development Plan and what does it evaluate?

An SDP is a comprehensive planning document that outlines the strategies and investments needed to establish passenger rail service along a corridor. Key areas of evaluation include infrastructure and capacity needs, equipment requirements, capital and operating costs, ridership projections, and revenue forecasts. The SDP is a required deliverable under Corridor ID and serves as the primary basis for future federal funding applications with the FRA.

What phase is the Project in now, and what comes next?

The Project is in Step 1 of Corridor ID, which involves developing the statement of work, schedule, and cost estimate for the SDP. Importantly, Corridor ID Step 1 focuses on planning-level work and does not establish final decisions on alignment, station locations, or construction. Once Step 1 is complete, the project can advance to Step 2, preparation of the SDP itself, followed by Step 3, which involves preliminary engineering and environmental review under NEPA. Much of the environmental work completed under the Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation Connections Study and the Texas High Speed Rail between Dallas and Houston NEPA review is expected to be leveraged when this Project reaches Step 3 of Corridor ID, reducing duplication of effort. Successfully navigating FRA Corridor ID positions the corridor for future federal funding opportunities.



How is this study being funded?

NCTCOG received a \$500,000 grant through the FRA Corridor ID program to support Step 1. The prior planning work on the Dallas to Fort Worth Segment (the Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation Connections Study) was funded through approximately \$13.8 million in Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funding and \$3.7 million in local funding. The Dallas to Houston segment has been studied by using approximately \$125 million in private funds by Texas Central Railroad, now Texas High Speed Rail Holdings, LLC.

PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Why is public and stakeholder engagement part of this process?

Public and stakeholder input is a core part of responsible transportation planning and a requirement of the FRA Corridor ID program. Input from the communities, local governments, businesses and residents along the corridor helps ensure that the SDP will reflect the needs and priorities of the people and places it will serve.

What opportunities will be available for public input?

NCTCOG will offer a range of engagement opportunities throughout the SDP development process, including public meetings, stakeholder briefings, online comment tools, and project updates distributed through email and other channels. Materials will be available in multiple languages to ensure accessibility for all communities along the corridor.

How can I stay informed and provide input?

Project and study information is frequently updated on the NCTCOG website. You may sign up to receive updates about the study and meeting notices and provide comments through the online comment form or by participating in public meetings. To contact the Project team directly: