



MAYOR PRO-TEM ED GONZALEZ
Houston City Council Member, District H

January 8, 2015

Michael Johnsen, Lead Environmental Protection Specialist
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE, MS-20
Washington, D.C. 20590

SENT VIA EMAIL: Michael.johnsen@dot.gov

Dear Mr. Johnsen,

As the City of Houston's Mayor Pro-Tem and Council Member representing District H, I write to express concerns with the currently proposed routes for Texas Central Railway's proposed high-speed rail line connecting Houston and Dallas. While I am a proponent of innovative transportation concepts like the high-speed rail line and envision a very successful Houston – Dallas connection, it is imperative that my constituents are able to have their concerns addressed before any further action is taken.

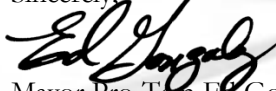
Over the last few months, Houstonians have become informed on the proposed high-speed rail line through a series of presentations to our City Council and to our communities by the private Texas Central High-Speed Railway. While I commend Judge Robert Eckels and their entire team for their efforts to inform our citizens and to hear community concerns, I would like to see comprehensive plans that address major issues raised by District H residents, some of which are:

- Potential for decreased property values and burdensome right-of-way acquisitions.
- Blighted neighborhood aesthetics caused by the elevated rails running continuously each day.
- Noise pollution and vibrations caused by the proximity of the proposed routes to our neighborhoods.
- Lack of interconnectivity to existing public transit options, lack of consideration of existing neighborhood transportation plans.

As this proposed project moves forward, I would like to encourage Texas Central High-Speed Railway to address the concerns recapped above and to take advantage of existing major transportation corridors like I-610 and I-45 to connect Houston and Dallas. As our cities continue to grow, this increased interconnectivity has the potential to positively impact our entire state; let us ensure that our communities remain at the table throughout the process.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,


Mayor Pro-Tem Ed Gonzalez
Council Member, District H